

PICTURES

AND

EMBLEMS

ALEXANDER MACLAREN, D.D.



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PICTURES AND EMBLEMS.

BY

ALEXANDER MACLAREN, D.D.

Being Illustrations from his Sermons.

SELECTED BY

JAMES H. MARTYN.

"Jucundum nihil est, nisi quod reficit varietas."—*Bacon.*

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PREFACE.

IT will be conceded that illustrations have their place and purpose in sermons. But illustrations should be selected with a reference to their force rather than to their beauty, and be marked more by their homely propriety than by their grace or elegance.

Whatever is pure is also simple. It does not keep the eye on itself. Effective illustration will not divert the mind from the truth it is designed to illustrate, as a gorgeous cathedral window, through which the light streams, tinged with a thousand hues, attracts the attention to the pomp and splendour of the artist's work; but the window should be forgotten in the landscape it displays.

Dr. Maclaren's Sermons have won a high place amongst our Christian classics; and the illustrations from those Sermons which have been gathered together in this volume are characterized by freshness and refined and delicate beauty, and are rich in devotional, not less than in practical, lessons.

It is hoped that their publication in a separate volume may be helpful to preachers and students, and acceptable to all those who can appreciate what is beautiful and true in our best Sermon literature

It is proper to say that Dr. Maclaren has had no part in the selection of the illustrations, but they are published by his kind permission.

J. H. M.

ROCK FERRY, CHESHIRE.

September, 1885.

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Alexander Thompson

Blair

March 1887

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CHAPTER I.



REMEMBER once seeing a mob of revellers streaming out from a masked ball, in a London theatre, in the early morning sunlight; draggled and heavy-eyed, the rouge showing on the cheeks, and the shabby tawdriness of the foolish costumes pitilessly revealed by the pure light. So will many a life look when the day dawns, and the wild riot ends in its unwelcome beams.

2. The issue and outcome of believing service and faithful stewardship here is the possession of the true life which stands in union with God, in measure so great, and in quality so wondrous, that it lies on the pure locks of the victors like a flashing diadem, all ablaze with light in a hundred jewels.

3. The spiritual life is, at the best, but a hidden glory, and a struggling spark. There is no profit in seeking to gaze into that light of glory so as to

discern the shapes of those who walk in it, or the elements of its lambent flames. Enough that in its gracious beauty transfigured souls move as in their native atmosphere.

4. The final condition will be the perfection of human society. There all who love Christ will be drawn together, and old ties, broken for a little while here, be re-knit in yet holier form, never to be parted more. Ah! the all-important question for each of us is how may we have such a hope, like a great sunset light shining into the western windows of our souls. There is but one answer: Trust Christ. That is enough. Nothing else is.

5. Living by Christ, we may be ready quietly to lie down when the time comes, and may have all the future filled with the blaze of a great hope that glows brighter as the darkness thickens. That peaceful hope will not leave us till consciousness fails, and then, when it has ceased to guide us, Christ Himself will lead us, scarcely knowing where we are, through the waters, and when we open our half-bewildered eyes in brief wonder, the first thing we see will be His welcoming smile, and His voice will say, as a tender surgeon might to a little child waking after an operation, "It is all over." We lift our hands wondering and find wreaths on our

brow. We lift our eyes, and lo! all about us a crowned crowd of conquerors.

“And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which we have loved long since and lost awhile.”

6. The past struggles are joyful in memory, as the mountain ranges—which were all black rock and white snow while we toiled up their inhospitable steeps—lie purple in the mellowing distance, and burn like fire as the sunset strikes their peaks.

7. Many a wild winter's day has a fair cloudless close, and lingering opal hues diffused through all the quiet sky. “At eventide it shall be light.”

8. The only life that bears being looked back upon is a life of Christian devotion and effort. It shows fairer when seen in the strange cross-lights that come when we stand on the boundary of two worlds—with “the white radiance of eternity” beginning to master the vulgar oil lamps of earth—than when seen by these alone.

9. There is such a congruity between righteousness and the crown of life, that it can be laid on none other head but that of a righteous man, and if it could, all its amaranthine flowers would shrivel and fall when they touched an impure brow.

10. All work that contributes to a great end is great ; as the old rhyme has it, "for the want of a nail a kingdom was lost."

11. We learn from historians that the origin of nobility in some Teutonic nations is supposed to have been the dignities enjoyed by the king's household—of which you find traces still. The king's master of the horse, or chamberlain, or cup-bearer becomes noble. Christ's servants are lords, free because they serve Him, noble because they wear His livery and bear the mark of Jesus as their Lord.

12. There is a wide-spread unwillingness to say the word "Death." It falls on men's hearts like clods on a coffin—so all people and languages have adopted euphemisms for it—fair names which wrap silk round his dart and somewhat hides his face.

13. We lose nothing worth keeping when we leave behind the body, as a dress not fitted for home, where we are going.

14. Man's course begins in a garden, but it ends in a city.

15. We may change climates, and for the stormy bleakness of life may have the long, still days of heaven ; but we do not change ourselves.

16. This world is not to be for us an enchanted garden of delights, any more than it should appear a dreary desert of disappointment and woe. But it should be to us mainly a palaestra, or gymnasium and exercising ground. You cannot expect many flowers or much grass in the place where men wrestle and run. We need not much mind though it be bare, if we can only stand firm on the hard earth; nor lament that there are so few delights to stay our eyes from the goal.

17. Thinking of the past, there may be a sense of not unwelcome lightening from a load of responsibility when we have got all the stress and strain of the conflict behind us, and have, at any rate, not been altogether beaten. We may feel like a captain who has brought his ship safe across the Atlantic, through foul weather and past many an iceberg, and gives a great sigh of relief as he hands over the charge to the pilot, who will take her across the harbour bar and bring her to her anchorage in the land-locked bay, where no tempests rave any more for ever.

18. The life of men and of creatures is like a river, with its source, and its course, and its end. The life of God is like the ocean, with joyous movements of tides and currents of life and energy and purpose, but ever the same and ever returning upon itself.

19. Every pebble that you kick with your foot, if thought about and treasured, contains the secret of the universe. The commonplaces of our faith are the food upon which our faith will most richly feed.

20. The commonplaces of religion are the most important. Everybody needs air, light, bread and water. Dainties are for the few ; but the table which our religion sometimes spreads for them, is like that at a rich man's feast—plenty of rare dishes but never a bit of bread ; plenty of wine and wine-glasses, but not a tumbler-full of spring water to be had.

21. When Nero is on the throne, the only possible place for Paul is the dungeon opening on to the scaffold. Better to be the martyr than the Caesar.

22. "Heaven doth with us as men with torches do,
Not light them for themselves."

"God hath shined into our hearts that we might give to others the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

23. Loyola demanded from his black-robed militia obedience to the General of the Order so complete that they were to be "just like a corpse," or "a staff in a blind man's hand." Such a regiment made by a man is, of course, the crushing of the will, and the emasculation of the whole nature.

But such a demand yielded to from Christ is the vitalising of the will, and the ennobling of the spirit.

24. The owner of the slave could set him to any work he thought fit. So our Owner gives all His slaves their several tasks. As in some despotic eastern monarchies the Sultan's mere pleasure makes of one slave his vizier, and of another his slipper-bearer, our King chooses one man to a post of honour, and another to a lowly place ; and none have a right to question the allocation of work.

25. Let our spirits stretch out all their powers to the better things beyond, as the plants grown in darkness will send out pale shoots that feel blindly towards the light, or the seed sown on the top of a rock will grope down the bare stone for the earth by which it must be fed.

26. The doctrine of averages does not do away with the voluntary character of each single act. The same number of letters are yearly posted without addresses. Does anybody dream of not scolding the errand boy who posted them, or the servant who did not address, because he knows that ?

27. The coals were scattered from the hearth in Jerusalem by the armed heel of violence. That did not put the fire out, but only spread it, for wherever they were flung they kindled a blaze.

28. What kind of Christians must they be who think of Christ as "a Saviour for me," and take no care to set Him forth as "a Saviour for you?" What should we think of men in a shipwreck who were content to get into the life-boat, and let everybody else drown? What should we think of people in a famine feasting sumptuously on their private stores, whilst women were boiling their children for a meal, and men fighting with dogs for garbage on the dunghills?

29. In the simple astronomy of early times, there was no failure, nor decay, nor change, in the calm heavens. The planets, year by year, returned punctually to their places; and, unhasting and unresting, rolled upon their way. Weakness and weariness had no place there; and the power by which the most ancient heavens were upheld and maintained was God's unwearied might.

30. What God does with poor weak creatures like us, when He lifts up our weaknesses, and replenishes our weariness; pouring oil and wine into our wounds and a cordial into our lips, and sending us, with the joy of pardon, upon our road again; that is a greater thing than when He rolls Neptune in its mighty orbit round the central sun, or upholds with unwearied arms, from cycle to cycle, the circle

of the heavens with all its stars. "He giveth power to the faint" is His divinest work.

31. The leaven does not leaven the whole mass in a moment, but creeps on from particle to particle.

32. From the beginning the true "Hero" of the Bible is God ; its theme is His self-revelation culminating for evermore in the Man Jesus. All other men interest the writers only as they are subsidiary or antagonistic to that revelation. As long as that breath blows them they are music ; else they are but common reeds.

33. Christ is all in all to His people. He is all their strength, wisdom, and righteousness. They are but the clouds irradiated by the sun, and bathed in its brightness. He is the light which flames in their grey mist and turns it to a glory. They are but the belt and cranks and wheels ; He is the power. They are but the channel, muddy and dry ; He is the flashing life which fills it and makes it a joy. They are the body ; He is the Soul dwelling in every part to save it from corruption and give movement and warmth.

"Thou art the organ, whose full breath is thunder ;
I am the keys, beneath Thy fingers pressed."

34. Let us be thankful if our consciences speak to us more loudly than they used to do. It is a sign

of growing holiness, as the tingling in a frost-bitten limb is of returning life.

35. In all fields of effort, whether intellectual, moral or mechanical, as faculty grows, consciousness of insufficiency grows with it. The farther we get up the hill the more we see how far it is to the horizon.

36. The thick skin of a savage will not be disturbed by lying on sharp stones, while a crumpled rose-leaf robs the Sybarite of his sleep. So the habit of evil hardens the cuticle of conscience, and the practice of goodness restores tenderness and sensibility ; and many a man laden with crime knows less of its tingling than some fair soul that looks almost spotless to all eyes but its own. One little stain of rust will be conspicuous on a brightly-polished blade, but if it be all dirty and dull a dozen more or fewer will make little difference. As men grow better they become like that glycerine barometer recently introduced, on which a fall or a rise, that would have been invisible with mercury to record it, takes up inches, and is glaringly conspicuous.

37. The higher the temperature the more chilling would it be to pass into an ice-house ; and the more our lives are brought into fellowship with the perfect Life, the more we shall feel our own shortcomings.

38. We are all writing our lives' histories here, as if with one of these "manifold writers"—a black blank page beneath the flimsy sheet on which we write, but presently the black page will be taken away, and the writing will stand out plain on the page behind that we did not see. Life is the filmy, unsubstantial page on which our pen rests; the black page is death; and the page beneath is that indelible transcript of our earthly actions, which we shall find waiting for us to read, with shame and confusion of face, or with humble joy, in another world.

39. In all regions of life a wise classification of men arranges them to their aims, rather than their achievements. The visionary who attempts something high and accomplishes scarcely anything of it, is often a far nobler man, and his poor, broken, foiled, resultless life, far more perfect than his who aims at marks on the low levels and hits them full. Such lives as these, full of yearning and aspiration, though it be for the most part vain, are

"Like the young moon with a ragged edge
E'en in its imperfection beautiful."

40. The deeds that stand highest on the records of heaven are not those which we vulgarly call great. Many "a cup of cold water only" will be found to

have been rated higher there than jewelled golden chalices brimming with rare wines.

41. God's treasures, where He keeps His children's gifts, will be like many a mother's secret store of relics of her children, full of things of no value, what the world calls "trash," but precious in His eyes, for the love's sake that was in them.

42. It does not matter whether you have the Gospel in a penny testament, printed on thin paper with black ink, and done up in cloth, or in an illuminated missal glowing in gold and colour, painted with loving care on fair parchment, and bound in jewelled ivory. And so it matters little about the material or the scale on which we express our devotion and our aspirations ; all depends on what we copy, not on the size of the canvas on which, or on the material in which, we copy it.

43. Surely he has best learned his true place, and the worth of Jesus Christ, who abides with unmoved humility at His feet, and, like the lonely, lowly forerunner, puts away all temptations to self-assertion while joyfully accepting it as the law of his life to

" Fade in the light of the planet he loves,
To fade in His love and to die."

44. We shall sleep none the less sweetly, though none be talking about us over our heads. The world

has a short memory, and, as the years go on, the list that it has to remember grows so crowded that it is harder and harder to find room to write a new name on it, or to read the old. The letters on the tombstones are soon erased by the feet that tramp across the churchyard.

45. To Jesus all service done from the same motive is the same, and His measure of excellence is the quantity of love and spiritual force in our deeds, not the width of the area over which they spread. An estuary that goes wandering over miles of shallows may have less water in it, and may creep more languidly, than the torrent that thunders through some narrow gorge.

46. "Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence we also look for the Lord Jesus as Saviour." The little, outlying colony in this far-off edge of the empire is ringed about by wide-stretching hosts of dusky barbarians. Far as the eye can reach, their myriads cover the land, and the watchers from the ramparts might well be dismayed if they had only their own resources to depend on. But they know that the Emperor in His progress will come to this sorely beset outpost, and their eyes are fixed on the pass in the hill where they expect to see the waving banners and the gleaming spears. Soon, like our

countrymen in Lucknow, they will hear the music and the shouts that tell that He is at hand. Then when He comes, He will raise the siege, and scatter all the enemies as the chaff of the threshing-floor; and the colonists who held the post will go with Him to the land which they have never seen, but which is their home, and will, with the Victor, sweep in triumph "through the gates into the city."

47. The noblest use for the precious ointment of love, which the poorest of us bears in the alabaster-box of the heart, is to break it on Christ's head.

48. If we are content to see but one step at a time, and take it, we shall find our way made plain. The river wends, and often we seem on a lake without an exit. Then is the time to go half-speed, and doubtless, when we get a little further, the overlapping hills on either bank will part, and the gorge will open out. We do not need to see it a mile off; enough if we see it when we are close upon it. It may be as narrow and grim, with slippery, black cliffs towering on either side of the narrow ribbon of the stream, as the cañons of American rivers, but it will float our boat into broader reaches and onwards to the great sea.

49. Our blunders mostly come from letting our wishes interpret our duties, or hide from us plain

indications of unwelcome tasks. We are all apt to do like Nelson, and put the telescope to the blind eye when a signal is flying that we dislike.

50. Some of us have sad memories of times when we journeyed in company with those who will never share our tent or counsel our steps any more, and, as we sit lonely by our watchfire in the wilderness, have aching hearts and silent nights.

51. There are dangers and barren places, and a great solitude in spite of love and companionship, and many marchings and lurking foes, and grim rocks, and fierce suns, and parched wells, and shadeless sand wastes enough in every life to make us quail often, and look grave always, when we think of what may be before us. Who knows what we shall see when we top the next hill, or round the shoulder of the cliff that bars our way? What shout of an enemy may crash in upon the sleeping camp; or what stifling gorge of barren granite—blazing in the sun, and trackless to our feet, shall we have to march through to-day?

52. There is nothing so certain as the unexpected. The worst thunder comes on us out of a clear sky. Our Waterloos have a way of crashing into the midst of our feasts, and generally it is when all goes "merry as a marriage bell" that the cannon

shot breaks in upon the mirth, which tells that the enemy have crossed the river and the battle is begun.

53. An abstract law of right is but a cold guide, like the stars that shine keen in the polar winter.

54. No man can safely isolate himself, either intellectually or in practical matters. The self-trained scholar is usually incomplete. Crotchets take possession of the solitary thinker, and peculiarities of character—that would have been kept in check, and might have become aids in the symmetrical development of the whole man, if they had been reduced and modified in society—get swollen into deformities in solitude.

55. Are we not ever in danger of giving the very choicest of our love to the dear ones of earth, lavishing on them the precious juice which flows from the freshly-gathered grapes, and putting God off with the last impoverished and scanty drops which can be squeezed from the husks?

56. We are all apt to pin our faith on some trusted guide, and many of us, in these days, will follow some teacher of negations with an implicit submission which we refuse to give to Jesus Christ. We put the teacher between ourselves and God, and

give to the glowing colours of the painted window the admiration that is due to the light which shines through it.

57. Like the armed colonists whom Russia and other empires had on their frontier, who received their bits of land on condition of holding the border against the enemy, and pushing it forward a league or two when possible, Christian men are set down in their places to be "wardens of the marches," citizen soldiers who hold their homesteads on a military tenure, and who are to "strive together for the faith of the gospel."

58. Go up to your fears and speak to them, and as ghosts are said to do, they will generally fade away.

59. It is usually a half-look at adversaries, and a mistaken estimate of their strength, that make Christians afraid. We may go into the battle, as the rash French minister said he did into the Franco-German war, "with a light heart," and that for good reasons.

60. It is strange and impressive when we come to think how Providence, working with the same uniform materials in all human lives, can yet, like some skilful artist, produces endless novelty and surprises in each life.

61. The traitor was gone (John xiii. 31). His presence had been a restraint ; and now that that spot in their feast of charity had disappeared the Master felt at ease ; and, like some stream out of the bed of which a black rock has been taken, His words flow more freely. “ *Therefore*, when he was gone out, Jesus said.”

62. Like the pellucid waters of the Rhine and the turbid stream of the Moselle, that flow side by side over a long space, neither of them blending discernably with the other, so the shrinking from the cross and the desire were cotemporaneous in Christ’s mind.

63. The New Testament, generally, represents the cross as the very lowest point of Christ’s degradation ; John’s Gospel always represents it as the very highest point of His glory. And the two things are both true ; just as the zenith of our sky is the nadir of the sky for those on the other side of the world.

64. We know very early in life, unless we are wonderfully frivolous and credulous, that the thread of our days is a mingled strand, and the prevailing tone a sober neutral tint.

65. All His life long Christ had been revealing His heart, through the narrow rifts of deeds, like someslender lancet windows ; but in His death all the barriers are thrown down, and the brightness blazes out upon men.

66. All through His life He had been trying to communicate the box of ointment exceeding precious, but when the box was broken the house was filled with the odour.

67. There blends, in that last act of our Lord's—for His death was His act—in strange fashion, the two contradictory ideas of glory and shame ; like some sky, all full of dark thunder-clouds, and yet between them the brightest blue and the blazing sunshine.

68. All His life long Christ was the light of the world, but the very noontide hour of His glory was that hour when the shadow of eclipse lay over all the land, and He hung on the Cross dying in the dark. At His eventide 'it was light,' and 'He endured the Cross, despising the shame' ; and, lo ! the shame flashed up into the very brightness of glory, and the very ignominy and the suffering were the jewels of His crown.

69. A bit of stained-glass may be glowing with angel-forms and pictured saints, but it always keeps some of the light out, and it always hinders us from seeing through it. And all external worship and form has such a tendency to usurp more than belongs to it, and to drag us down subtly to its own level.

70. That is the perfection of a man's nature when his will fits on to God's like one of Euclid's triangles super-imposed upon another, and line for line coincides. When his will allows a free passage to the will of God, without resistance, as light travels through transparent glass; when his will responds to the touch of God's finger upon the keys, like the telegraphic needle to the operator's hand; then man has attained all that God and religion can do for him, all that his nature is capable of.

71. Love is the only fire that is hot enough to melt the iron obstinacy of a creature's will.

72. The vine which trails along the ground, and twines its tendrils round any rubbish which it may come upon is sure to be trodden under foot. If it lift itself from the earth, and fling its clasping rings round the shaft of the Cross, its stem will not be bruised, and its clusters will be heavier and sweeter. The tendrils which anchor it to the rubbish heap are the same as those which clasp it to the Cross.

73. The trust with which we lean upon the bruised reeds of human nature is the same as that with which we lean upon the iron pillar of a Saviour's aid.

74. Just as the hand of a dyer that has been working with crimson will be crimson ; just as the hand that has been holding fragrant perfumes will be perfumed ; so my faith, which is only the hand by which I lay hold on precious things, will take the tincture and the fragrance of what it grasps.

75. Christ towers up above the history of the world and the process of revelation, like Mount Everest among the Himalayas. To that great peak all the country on the one side runs upwards, and from it all the valleys on the other descend ; and the springs are born there which carry verdure and life over the world.

76. Christ is the true Prometheus that has come from Heaven with fire, the fire of the Divine Life in the reed of His humanity, and He imparts it to us all if we will.

77. Many an erudite scholar that has studied the Bible all his life, has missed the purpose for which it was given ; and many a poor old woman in her garret has found it.

78. Suppose one of those old Spanish explorers in the 16th century had been led into some of those rich Mexican treasure-houses, where all round him were massive bars of gold, and gleaming diamonds, and precious stones, and had come out from the abundance with sixpence worth in his palm, when he might have loaded himself with ingots of pure and priceless metal! That is what some of us do. When Jesus Christ puts the key of His storehouse into our hands, and says to us "Go in and help yourselves," we stop as soon as we are within the threshold. We do little more than take some insignificant corner, nibbled off the great solid mass of riches that might belong to us, and bear *that* away.

79. Is there any place in any of our rooms where there is a little bit of carpet worn white by our knees?

80. Loose things on the deck of a ship will be blown or washed overboard when the storm comes. There is only one way to keep them firm, and that is to lash them to something that is fixed. It is not the bit of rope that gives them security, but it is the stable thing to which they are lashed. Lash yourself to Christ by faith, and whatever storm or tempest comes you will be safe, and stand firm and immovable.

81. All manner of differences in opinion, in politics, in culture, in race, which may separate men from men, are like the cracks upon the surface of a bit of rock which are an inch deep, while the solid mass goes down a thousand feet.

82. Each tiny particle of a magnet, if it be smitten off the whole mass, is magnetic, and sends out influence from its two little poles. And so the smallest and the feeblest faith is one in character, and one in intrinsic value, with the loftiest and superbest.

83. The power of sympathising with any character is the partial possession of that character for ourselves. A man who is capable of having his soul bowed by the stormy thunder of Beethoven, or lifted to heaven by the ethereal melody of Mendelssohn, is a musician, though he never composed a bar. The man who recognises and feels the grandeur of the organ music of *Paradise Lost* has some of the poet in him, though he be a "mute inglorious Milton."

84. All sympathy and recognition of character involves some likeness to that character. The poor woman that brought the sticks and prepared for the prophet enters into the prophet's mission, and shares in the prophet's work and reward, though his task was to beard Ahab, and hers was only to bake his bread.

85. The old Knight that clapped Luther on the back when he went into the Diet of Worms, and said to him : " Well done, little monk !" shared in Luther's victory and in Luther's crown. He that helps a prophet because he is a prophet, has got the making of a prophet in himself.

86. As all work done from the same motive is the same in God's eyes, whatever be the outward shape of it, so the work that involves the same spiritual type of character will involve the same reward. You find the Egyptian medal on the breast of the soldiers that kept the base of communication as well as on the breasts of the men that stormed the works at Tel-el-Kebir.

87. The sculptor makes the marble image by chipping away the superfluous marble. Ah ! and when you have to chip away superfluous flesh and blood, it is bitter work, and the chisel is often deeply dyed in gore, and the mallet seems to be very cruel.

88. There is an old proverb : " The shoemaker's wife is always the worst shod." The families of many very busy Christian teachers suffer woefully for want of remembering " He first findeth his own brother."

89. "Thou God seest me" is a very unwelcome thought to a great many men, and it *will* be so, unless we can give it the modification which it receives from belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ, and feel sure that the eyes which are blazing with Divine Omniscience are dewy with divine and human love.

90. If you do not seek Christ, as surely as He is parted from our sense you will lose Him ; and He will be parted from you wholly ; for there is no way by which a person who is not before our eyes may be kept near us except only by the diligent effort on our part to keep thought, and love, and will, in contact with Him ; thought meditating, love going out towards Him, will submitting. Unless there be this effort, you will lose your Master as surely as a little child in a crowd will lose his nurse and his guide, if his hand slips from out the protecting hand. The dark shadow of the earth on which you stand will slowly steal over His silvery brightness, as it did last night over the moon's,* and you will not know how you have lost Him, but only be sadly aware that your heaven is darkened.

91. May I say that as a mother will sometimes pretend to her child to hide, that the child's delight may be the greater in searching and in finding, so

* Total eclipse of the moon—August 4, 1884.

Christ has gone away from our sight in order, for one reason, that He may stimulate our desires to feel after Him.

92. All the antagonism that has stormed against Christ and His cause and words, and His followers and lovers, has been impotent and vain. The pursuers are like dogs chasing a bird, sniffing along the ground after their prey, which all the while sits out of their reach on a bough and carols to the sky.

93. If we care anything about Christ at all, our hearts will turn to Him as naturally as, when the winter begins to pinch, the migrating birds seek the sunny south, turning by an instinct that they do not themselves understand.

94. The same law which sends loving thoughts out across the globe to seek for husband, child, or friend when absent, sets the really Christian heart seeking for the Christ, whom, having not seen, it loves. As surely as the ivy tendril feels out for a support ; as surely as the roots of a mountain-ash growing on the top of a boulder fall down the side of a rock till they reach the soil ; as truly as the stork follows the warmth to the sunny Mediterranean, so truly, if your heart loves Christ, will the very law of your life be—"Ye shall seek Me."

95. The chains of sin can be got off. Christ looses them by His blood. Like a drop of corrosive acid, that blood, falling upon the fetters, dissolves them, and the prisoner goes free, emancipated by the Son.

96. Each man of all the race may be quite sure that he had a place in that Divine-human love of Christ's, as He hung upon the cross. I may take it all to myself, as the whole rainbow is mirrored on each eye that looks.

97. The book which closes the new Testament "shuts up all" "with a seven-fold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies" as Milton says, in its stately music, and may well represent for us, in that perpetual cloud of incense rising up fragrant to the Throne of God and of the Lamb, the unceasing love and thanksgiving which should be man's answer to Christ's love and sacrifice.

98. A great thinker once said that he would rather have the search after truth than the possession of truth. It was a rash word, but it pointed to the fact that there is a search which is only one shade less blessed than the possession.

99. State and place are determined *yonder* by character. Take a bottle of some solution in which heterogeneous matters have all been melted up together, and let it stand on a shelf there and gradually

settle down, and they will settle in regular layers, the heaviest at the bottom and the lightest at the top, and stratify themselves according to gravity. And that is how the other world is arranged—stratified. When all the confusions of this present are at an end, and all the moisture is driven off, men and women will be left in layers,—like drawing to like.

100. Like the granite all fluid and hot, and fluid because it was hot, Peter needed to cool in order to solidify into rock.





CHAPTER II.



THE worst man is least troubled by his conscience. It is like a lamp that goes out in the thickest darkness.

2. Instant by instant, with unbroken flow, as golden shafts of light travel from the central sun, and each beam is linked with the source from which it comes by a line that stretches through millions and millions of miles ; so, God's gift of strength pours into us as we need.

3. Grace abhors a vacuum as nature does ; and, just as the endless procession of the waves rises up on to the beach, or as the restless network of the moonlight irradiation of the billows stretches all across the darkness of the sea ; so that unbroken continuity of strength gives grace for grace according

to our need, and as each former supply is expended and used up, God pours Himself into our hearts anew.

4. Soldiers who could stand firm and strike with all their might in the hour of battle, will fall asleep, or have their courage ooze out at their fingers' ends, when they have to keep solitary watch at their posts through a long winter's night.

5. It is a great deal easier to be up to the occasion in some shining moment of a man's life, when he knows that a supreme hour has come, than it is to keep that high tone when plodding over all the dreary plateau of uneventful, monotonous travel and dull duties. It is easier to run fast for a minute than to grind along the dusty road for a day.

6. Many a ship has stood the tempest, and then has gone down in the harbour because its timbers have been gnawed to pieces by white ants. And many a man can do what is wanted in the trying moments, and yet make shipwreck of his faith in uneventful times.

“Like ships that have gone down at sea,
When heaven was all tranquillity.”

7. We have all a few moments in life of hard, glorious running; but we have days and years of walking—the uneventful discharge of small duties.

8. "I am the first and the last," says Christ, and His love partakes of that eternity. It is like a golden fringe which keeps the net of creation from ravelling out.

9. When Christ was here on earth, the multitude thronged Him and pressed Him; but the wasted forefinger of one timid woman could reach the garment's hem for all the crowd.

10. Past—present—future. These are but the lower layer of clouds which drive before the winds and melt from shape to shape. God dwells above in the naked, changeless blue.

11. They tell us that the sun is fed by impact from objects from without, and that the day will come when its furnace-flames shall be quenched into grey ashes. But Christ's love is fed by no contributions from without, and will outlast the burnt-out sun, and gladden the ages of ages for ever.

12. The hand that holds the seven stars is as loving as the hand that was laid in blessing upon the little children; the face that is as the sun shining in its strength beams with as much love as when it drew publicans and harlots to His feet.

The breast that is girt with the golden girdle is the same breast upon which John leaned his happy head.

13. You remember the old story of the prisoner in his tower, delivered by his friend, who sent a beetle to crawl up the wall, fastening a silken thread to it, which had a thread a little heavier attached to the end of that, and so on, and so on, each thickening in diameter until they got to a cable. That is how the devil has got hold of a great many of us. He weaves round us silken threads to begin with, slight, as if we could break them with a touch of our fingers, and they draw after them, as certainly as destiny, at each remove a thickening chain, until, at last, we are tied and bound, and our captor laughs at our mad plunges for freedom, which are as vain as a wild bull's in the hunter's nets.

14. There is such a fate as being saved, yet so as by fire, going into the brightness with the smell of fire on your garments.

15. The starry vault that bends above us so far away, is the same in the number of its stars when gazed on by the savage with his unaided eye, and by the astronomer with the strongest telescope; and the Infinite God, who arches above us, but

comes near to us, discloses galaxies of beauty and oceans of abyssmal light in Himself according to the strength and clearness of the eye that looks upon Him.

16. Some imperfect Christians have but little capacity for possessing God, and therefore their heaven will not be as bright, nor studded with as majestic constellations as others.

17. "I am going down into the pit ; you hold the ropes," said Carey the pioneer missionary. They that hold the ropes, and the daring miner that swings away down in the darkness, are one in work, may be one in the motive, and, if they are, shall be one in the reward.

18. The little child who believes in Christ may seem to be insignificant in comparison with the prophet with his God-touched lips, or the righteous man of the old dispensation, with his austere purity ; as a humble violet may seem by the side of a rose with its heart of fire, or a white lily, regal and tall.

19. Oh ! what a reversal of this world's judgments and estimates is coming one day, when the names that stand high in the roll of fame shall be forgotten, like photographs that have been shut up in a portfolio, and when you take them out have faded off the paper.

20. The world knows nothing of its greatest men, but there is a day coming when the spurious mushroom aristocracy of power and the like, that the world has worshipped, will be forgotten; like the nobility of some conquered land, that is brushed aside and relegated to private life by the new nobility of the conquerors; and the true nobles, God's greatest—the righteous, who are righteous because they have trusted in Christ—shall shine forth like the sun “in the kingdom of My Father.”

21. The gospel is not merely a message of deliverance, it is also a rule of conduct. It is not merely theology, it is also ethics. Like some of the ancient municipal charters, the grant of privileges and proclamation of freedom is also the sovereign code which imposes duties and shapes life.

22. The greatest principles of the gospel are to be fitted to the smallest duties. The tiny round of the dew-drop is shaped by the same laws that mould the giant sphere of the largest planet. You cannot make a map of the poorest grass field without celestial observations. The star is not too high nor too brilliant to move before us and guide simple men's feet along their pilgrimage.

23. “If ye love me keep my commandments.” That draws all the agitations and fluctuations of

the soul after it, as the rounded fulness of the moon does the heaped waters in the tidal wave that girdles the world.

24. The censures nor the praise of man need not move us. We report to headquarters, and subordinates' estimate need be nothing to us.

25. "Seek ye my face." Nothing in all the world is so blessed as to hear that wonderful beseeching call sounding in every providence, travelling to us from every corner of the universe, speaking to us in the light of setting suns and in the hush of midnight skies; sounding in the break of waves on the beach, and in the rustle of leaves in the forest depths; whispering to us in the depths of our own hearts and wooing us by all things to our rest. Everything assumes a new meaning and is appareled in celestial light when we are aware that everything is a messenger from God to guide us to Himself.

26. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after God, for they shall be filled. He does not hold out a gift with one hand, and then twitch it away with the other when we try to grasp, as children do with light reflected from a looking-glass on a wall.

27. The descendants of the original settlers in our colonies talk still of coming to England as

“going home,” though they were born in Australia, and have lived there all their lives. In like manner we Christian people should keep vigorous in our minds the thought that our true home is there where we have never been, and that here we are foreigners and wanderers.

28. A Christian man's true affinities are with the things not seen, and with the persons there, however the surface relationships knit him to the earth. In the degree in which he is a Christian, he is a stranger here and a native of the heavens. That great City is, like some of the capitals of Europe, built on a broad river, with the mass of the metropolis on the one bank, but a wide-spreading suburb on the other. As the Trastevere is to Rome, as Southwark to London, so is earth to heaven, the bit of the city on the other side the bridge.

29. “Seek His face evermore.” That Face will brighten the darkness of death, and “make a sunshine in that shady place.” As you pass through the dark valley It will shine in upon you, as the sun looks through the savage gorge in the Himalayas, above which towers that strange mountain which is pierced right through with a circular aperture.

30. We do belong to another polity or order of things than that with which we are connected by the bonds of flesh and sense. Our true affinities are with the mother city. True we are here on earth, but far beyond the blue waters is another community, of which we are truly members ; and sometimes in calm weather we can see, if we climb to a height above the smoke of the valley where we dwell, the faint outline of the mountains of that other land, lying dream-like on the opal waves, and bathed in sunlight.

31. "The white radiance of Eternity" streaming through it from above gives all its beauty to the "dome of many-coloured glass" which men call life.

32. Some of us are as dead to the perception of God's gracious call, just because it has been sounding on uninterruptedly, as are the dwellers by a waterfall to its unremitting voice.

33. Fixed resolves need short professions. A Spartan brevity, as of a man with his lips tightly locked together, is fitting for such purposes.

34. How few of us could honestly crystallise the aims that guide our life into any single sentence? We try the impossible feat of riding on two horses at once. We resolve and retract, and

hesitate and compromise. The ship heads now one way and now another, and that not because we are wisely *tacking*—that is to say, seeking to reach one point by widely-varying courses—but because our hand is so weak on the helm that we drift wherever the wash of the waves and the buffets of the wind carry us.

35. That is heaven on earth, nobleness, peace, and power, to stand as at the point of some great ellipse, to which converge from all sides the music of God's manifold invitations, and listening to them, to say, I hear, and I obey. Thou dost call, and I answer, Lo! here am I.

36. Endeavour to keep vivid the consciousness of God's face as looking always in on you, like the solemn frescoes of the Christ which Angelico painted on the walls of his convent cells, that each poor brother might feel his Master ever with him.

37. An invisible vapour may hide a star, and we only know that the film is in the nightly sky because Jupiter, which was blazing a moment ago, has become dim or has disappeared. So fogs and vapours from the undrained swamps of our own selfish, worldly hearts may rob the thought of God of all its genial lustre, and make it an angry ball of fire, or may hide Him altogether from us.

38. If the resolve to seek God's face be not made by us at the very moment when we become aware of His loving call, it is very unlikely to be made at all. The first notes of that low Voice fall on the heart with more persuasive power than they retain after it has become familiar with them, even as the first-heard song of the thrush in spring-time, that breaks the long wintry silence, has a sweetness all its own. The echo answers as soon as the mother voice ceases.

39. The old word is true, with a new application to all who try in any shape to procure salvation by any work of their own: "Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep." But there is no need for all this profitless work. It is as foolish as it would be to spend money and pains in sinking a well in some mountainous country, where every hill-side is seamed with water-courses, and all that is needed is to put one end of any kind of wooden spout into the "burn" and your vessels under the other. The well of salvation is an Artesian well that needs no machinery to raise the water, but only pitchers to receive it as it rises.

40. The unsubstantial abstraction of the metaphysical God, described only in terms as far removed as may be from human analogies, for fear of being guilty of "anthropomorphism," never helped or

gladdened any human soul. It is but a bit of mist through which you can see the stars shining.

41. We see the radiant brightness of the full moon, but no eye has ever beheld the other side of that pure silver shield. We can know but an aspect and a side of God's nature.

42. That solitude of great men is one of the compensations which run through all life, and make the lot of the many little more enviable than that of the few great. "The little hills rejoice together on every side," but, far above their smiling companionships, the Alpine peak lifts itself into the cold air, and though it be "visited all night by troops of stars," is lonely amid the silence and the snow.

43. Which of us that is a father is not glad at his children's gifts, even though they be purchased with his own money, and be of little use? They mean love, so they are precious. And Christ, in like manner gladly accepts what we bring, even though it be love chilled by selfishness, and faith broken by doubt, and submission crossed by self-will.

44. As Philippi was to Rome, so is earth to heaven, the colony on the outskirts of the empire, ringed round by barbarians, and separated by

sounding seas, but keeping open its communications, and one in citizenship.

45. Amid the shows and shams of earth look ever onward to the realities, "the things which *are*," while all else only seems to be. The things which are seen are but smoke wreaths, floating for a moment across space, and melting into nothingness while we look.

46. God is His own motive, as His own end. As His Being, so His Love (which is His Being) is determined by nothing beyond Himself, but ever streams out by an energy from within, like the sunlight whose beams reach the limits of the system and travel on through dim, dark distances, not because they are drawn by the planet, but because they are urged from the central light.

47. The temptation once yielded to gains power. The crack in the embankment which lets a drop or two ooze through is soon a hole which lets out a flood.

48. The microscopic creatures, thousands of which will go into a square inch, make the great white cliffs that beetle over the wildest sea and front the storm. So, permanent and solid character is built up out of trivial actions; and this is the solemn aspect of our passing days, that they are making *us*.

49. No debt need be carried forward to another page of the book of our lives, for Christ has given Himself for us, and He speaks to us all—"Thy sins be forgiven thee."

50. As on some battle-field, whence all traces of the agony and fury have passed away, and harvests wave, and larks sing where blood ran and men groaned their lives out, some grey stone raised by the victors remains, and only the trophy tells of the forgotten fight ; so, that monumental word, "I have overcome," stands to all ages as the record of the silent, life-long conflict.

51. God does not lose us in the dust of death. The withered leaves on the pathway are trampled into mud, and indistinguishable to human eyes ; but He sees them even as when they hung green and sunlit on the mystic tree of life.

52. The planet nearest the sun is drenched and saturated with fiery brightness ; but the rays from the centre of life pass on to each of the sister spheres in its turn, and travel away outwards to where the remotest of them all rolls in its far-off orbit, unknown for milleniums to dwellers closer to the sun, but through all the ages visited by warmth and light according to its needs. These blessed spirits around the throne do not absorb and intercept the love of God.

53. We know of earthly loves which cannot die. They have entered so deeply into the very fabric of the soul, that, like some cloth dyed ingrain, as long as two threads hold together they will retain the tint.

54. Experience is ever the parent of hope, and the latter can only build with the bricks which the former gives.

55. When a man is walking along some narrow ledge amongst the Alps, with the precipice at his side, the guide will say to him : “ Do not look down, or you perish.” Your only hope is looking up. When Peter saw the water boisterous he began to sink. You fix your eye on Christ, and then your tottering faith will go in safety.

56. We can be sure of this, that God will be with us in all the days that lie before us. What may be round the next headland we know not ; but this we know, that the same sunshine will make a broadening path across the waters right to where we rock on the unknown sea, and the same unmoving nightly star will burn for our guidance. So we may let the waves and currents roll as they list ; or rather, as He lists, and be little concerned about the incidents or the companions of our voyage, since He is with us.

57. The awful power of habit solidifies actions into customs, and prolongs the reverberation of every note once sounded along the vaulted roof of the chamber where we live.

58. Few of us have reached middle life who do not, looking back, see our track strewn with the gaunt skeletons of dead friendships, and dotted with "oaks of weeping," waving green and mournful over graves, and saddened by footprints striking away from the line of march, and leaving us the more solitary for their departure.

59. "Do whate'er thou wilt, swift-footed Time,
To this wide world and all her fading sweets,"
it matters not, if only our hearts are stayed on God's love, which "neither things present nor things to come" can alter or remove.

60. The thought of the Omnipresence of God, so hard to grasp with vividness, and not altogether a glad one to a sinful soul, is all softened and glorified, as some solemn Alpine cliff of bare rock is when the tender morning light glows on it, when it is thought of as the Omnipresence of Love.

61. Forecasting is ever close by foreboding. Hope is interwoven with fear, the golden threads of the weft crossing the dark ones of the warp, and the whole texture gleaming bright or glooming, according to the angle at which it is seen.

62. It would be a very poor affair if all we had to say to men was :—"There is a beautiful example; follow it!" Models are all very well, only, unfortunately, there is nothing in a model to secure its being copied. You may have a most exquisite piece of penmanship lithographed on the top of the page in a child's copy-book, but what is the good of that, if the poor little hand is trembling when it takes the pen, and if the pen has got no ink in it, or the child does not want to learn? Copy-books are all very well, but you want something more than copy-books.

63. It takes a very strenuous effort to bring the unseen Christ before the mind habitually, and so as to produce effects in the life. You have to shut out a great deal besides in order to do that; as a man will shade his eyes with his hand in order to see some distant thing the more clearly. Keep out the cross lights, that you may look forward. You cannot see the stars, when you are walking down a town street and the gas lamps are lit. All those violet depths, and calm abysses, and blazing worlds, are concealed from you by the glare at your side. So, if you want to see into the depths and the heights, to see the great white throne and the Christ on it, who helps you to fight, you have to go out unto Him beyond the camp, and leave all its dazzling lights behind you.

64. Like some half-hewn block, such as travellers find in long-abandoned quarries, whence Egyptian temples, that were destined never to be completed, were built, our spirits are but partly "polished after the similitude of a palace," while much remains in the rough. The builders of these temples have mouldered away, and their unfinished handiwork will lie as it was when the last chisel touched it centuries ago, till the crack of doom; but stones for God's temples will be wrought to completeness and set in their places.

65. We have as much of God as we can hold. All Niagara may roar past a man's door, but only as much as he diverts through his own sluice will drive his mill, or quench his thirst. That grace is like the figures in the Eastern tales, that will creep into a narrow room no bigger than a nutshell, or will tower heaven high. Our spirits are like the magic tent whose walls expanded or contracted at the owner's wish; we may enlarge them to enclose far more of the grace than we have ever possessed.

66. There is ever something of dread in Hope's blue eyes.

67. In that great ocean of the Divine Love we live, and move, and have our being; floating in it like some sea-flower which spreads its filmy beauty and

waves its long tresses in the depths of mid-ocean. The sound of its waters is ever in our ears, and above, beneath, around us, its mighty currents run evermore.

68. We need not cower before the fixed gaze of some stony God, looking on us unmoved, like those Egyptian deities that sit pitiless with idle hands on their laps, and wide-open, lidless eyes gazing out across the sands. We need not fear the Omnipresence of Love, nor the Omniscience which knows us altogether, and loves us even as it knows.

69. "So great a cloud of witnesses." They are "a cloud" like that background of one of Raffaele's great pictures, which, at first sight, seems only a bright mist, and looked at more closely is all full of calm, angel faces.

70. As a boy learning to swim, after trying in the shallows and finding that the water bears him up, has confidence to strike out into deeper water, so Christ perfects our faith by rewarding it.

71. So long as we are joined to Christ, we partake of His life, and our lives become music and praise. The electric current flows from Him through all souls that are "in Him," and they glow with fair colours, which they owe to their contact with Jesus. Interrupt the communication, and all is darkness.

72. The picture of what men are, painted at the beginning of the Epistle to the Romans, is black, like a canvas of Rembrandt. The Bible is "nature's sternest painter, but her best."

73. The distance of a star is measured by the apparent change in its position, as seen from different points of the earth's surface or orbit. But the great Light of God's love stands steadfast in our heaven, nor moves a hair's-breadth, nor pours a feebler ray on us, whether we look up to it from the midsummer day of busy life, or from the midwinter of death. These opposites are parted by a distance to which the millions of miles of the world's path among the stars are but a point, and yet the love of God streams down on them alike.

74. How dusty and toil-worn the little group of Christians that landed at Puteoli must have looked as they toiled along the Appian Way and entered Rome! How contemptuously emperor, and philosopher, and priest, and patrician would have curled their lips if they had been told that in that little knot of Jewish prisoners lay a power before which theirs would cower and finally fade!

75. The Rabbis have a beautiful bit of teaching, buried among their rubbish, about angels. They say that there are two kinds of angels: the angels

of service and the angels of praise, of which two orders the latter is the higher, and that no angel in it praises God twice, but having once lifted up his voice in the psalm of heaven, then perishes and ceases to be. He has perfected his being, he has reached the height of his greatness, he has done what he was made for, let him fade away. The garb of legend is mean enough, but the thought it embodies is that ever true and solemn one, without which life is nought : "Man's chief end is to glorify God."

76. In heaven, after "ages of ages" of growing glory, we shall have to say, as each new wave of the shoreless, sunlit sea bears us onward, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be."

77. The palaces which we build are ever like that in the story, where one window remains dark and unjewelled, while the rest blaze in beauty. But when God builds, none can say, "He was not able to finish." In His great palace He makes her "windows of agate," and *all* her—"borders of pleasant stones."

78. I suppose that if the mediæval dream had ever come true, and an alchemist had ever turned a grain of lead into gold, he could have turned all the lead of the world in time, and with crucibles

and furnaces enough. The first step is all the difficulty; and if you and I have been changed from enemies into sons, and had one spark of love to God kindled in our hearts, that is a mightier change than any that remains to be effected in order to make us perfect. One grain has been changed, the whole mass will be in due time.

79. Widely as we stretch our reverent conceptions, there is ever something beyond. After we have resolved many a dim, white cloud in the starry sky, and found it all ablaze with suns and worlds, there will still hang, faint and far above us, hazy magnificences which we have not apprehended.

80. The same mysterious power lives in the swaying branch, and in the veined leaf, and in the blushing clusters. With like wondrous transformations of the one grace, the Lord pours Himself into our spirits, filling all needs and fitting for all circumstances.

81. Many a stately elm that seems full of vigorous life, for all its spreading boughs and clouds of dancing leaves, is hollow at the heart, and when the storm comes, goes down with a crash, and men wonder, as they look at the ruin, how such a mere shell of life, with a core of corruption, could stand so long. It rotted within, and fell at last because

its roots did not go deep down to the rich soil, where they would have found nourishment, but ran along near the surface, among gravel and stones. If we would stand firm, be sound within, and bring forth much fruit, we must strike our roots deep in Him who is the anchorage of our souls, and the nourisher of all our being.

82. Take the finest needle, and put it below a microscope, and it will be all ragged and irregular ; the fine, tapering lines will be broken by many a bulge and bend, and the point blunt and clumsy. Put the blade of grass to the same test, and see how true its outline, how delicate and true the spear-head of its point. God's work is perfect, man's work is clumsy and incomplete.

83. The longest line may be conceived of as produced simply by the motion of its initial point. So should our lives be ; our progress not consisting in leaving our early acts of faith behind us, but in repeating them over and over again, till the points coalesce in one unbroken line which goes straight to the throne and heart of Jesus.

84. As in some great symphony, the theme which was given out in low notes on one poor instrument recurs over and over again, embroidered with varying harmonies, and unfolding a richer

music till it swells into all the grandeur of the triumphant close, so our lives should be bound into a unity, and in their unity bound to Christ, by the constant renewal of our early faith, and the fathers come round again to the place which they occupied when, as children, they first knew Him that is from the beginning to the end one and the same.

85. Cleave to the Lord by habitual play of meditative thought on the treasures hidden in His name, and waiting, like gold in the quartz, to be the prize of our patient sifting and close gaze.

86. As our eyes travel over the wide field of Christendom, and our memories go back over the long ages of the story of the Church, let gladness, and not wonder or reluctance, be the temper with which we see the graces of Christian character lifting their meek blossoms in corners strange to us, and breathing their fragrance over the pastures of the wilderness. In many a cloister, in many a hermit's cell, from amidst the smoke of incense, through the dust of controversies, we should see and be glad to see, faces bright with the radiance caught from Christ.

87. Round the story of Christ's life the final struggle is to be waged. The foe feels that, so long as that remains, all other victories count for

nothing. We feel that if that goes, there is nothing to keep. The principles and the precepts will perish alike, as the fair palace of the old legend, that crumbled to dust when its builder died.

88. "Abide in Me and I in you." Fairest of all symbols is this lovely emblem of the vine, setting forth the sweet mystery of our union with Him. Far as it is from the outmost pliant tendril to the root, one life passes to the very extremities, and every cluster swells, and reddens, and mellows, because of its mysterious flow.

89. Augustine said, "Where Christ is there is the Church ;" and that is true, but vague : for the question still remains, "and where *is* Christ?"

90. It used to be an axiom that there was no life in the sea beyond a certain limit of a few hundred feet. It was learnedly and conclusively demonstrated that pressure and absence of light, and I know not what beside, made life at greater depths impossible. It was proved that in such conditions creatures could not live. And then, when that was settled, the "Challenger" put down her dredge five miles, and brought up healthy and good-sized living things with eyes in their heads, from that enormous depth. So, then the *savant* had to ask, *how* can there be life? instead of asserting

there cannot be ; and, no doubt, the answer will be forthcoming some day. We have all been too much accustomed to draw arbitrary limits to the diffusion of the life of Christ among men. Let us rather rejoice when we see forms of beauty, which bear the mark of His hand, drawn from depths that we deemed waste, and thankfully confess that the bounds of our expectation, and the framework of our institutions, do not confine the breadth of His working, nor the sweep of His grace.

91. A wide-spread literature provides so many—I would not say empty—spaces for any voice to reverberate in, that both the shouters and the listeners are apt to fancy the assailants are an army, when they are only a handful, armed mainly with trumpets and pitchers.

92. It is strange that the Jewish race should have so jealously preserved books which certainly did not flatter national pride, which put a mortifying explanation on national disasters, which painted them and their fathers in dark colours, which proclaimed truths they never loved, and breathed a spirit they never caught. It is stranger still that, in the long years of dispersion, the very vices and limitations of the people subserved the same end, and that stiff pedantry and laborious trifling—the poorest form of intellectual activity—should have guarded the letter

of the word, as the coral insects painfully build up their walls round some fair island of the southern sea.

93. How antique and ineffectual the pages of the past generations are compared with the ever fresh youth of the Bible, which, like the angels, is the youngest and the oldest of books.

94. Who knows anything about the world's wonders of books that, a hundred years ago, made good men's hearts tremble for the ark of God? You may find them in dusty rows on the top shelves of great libraries. But if their names had not occurred in the pages of Christian apologists, flies in amber, nobody in this generation would ever have heard of them.

95. Here at one end is the great fountain ever brimming. Draw from it ever so much, it sinks not one hair's breadth in its pure basin. Here, on the other side, is an intermittent flow, sometimes in scanty dribblets, sometimes in painful drops, sometimes more full and free, on the pastures of the wilderness. Wherefore these jerks and spasms? It must be something stopping the pipe. Yes, of course. God's might is ever the same, but our capacity of receiving and transmitting that might varies, and with it varies the energy with which that unchanging power is exerted in the world.

96. Driftwood may swim with the stream ; the ship that holds to her anchor swings the other way.

97. If your mother's name were defiled, would not your heart bound to her defence? When a prince is a dethroned exile, his throne is fixed deeper in the hearts of his adherents, "though his back be at the wall," and common souls become heroes because their devotion has been heightened to sublimity of self-sacrifice by a nation's rebellion. And when so many voices are proclaiming that God has never spoken to men, that our thoughts of His Book are dreams, and its long empire over men's spirits a waning tyranny, does cool indifference become us? will not fervour be sobriety, and the glowing emotion of our whole nature our reasonable service?

98. The consciousness that Christian truth is denied, makes some of you falter in its profession, and fancy that it is less certain simply because it is gainsaid. The mist wraps you in its folds, and it is difficult to keep warm in it, or to believe that love and sunshine are above it all the same. "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."

99. The golden rod, wherewith the Divine Builder measures from jewel to jewel in the walls of the new Jerusalem, takes in wider spaces than we have meted with our lines.

100. You may hammer ice on an anvil, or bray it in a mortar. What then? It is pounded ice still, except for the little portion melted by heat of percussion, and it will soon all congeal again. Melt it in the sun, and it flows down in sweet water, which mirrors that light which loosed its bonds of cold. So, hammer away at unbelief with your logical sledge-hammers, and you will change its shape, perhaps; but it is none the less unbelief because you have ground it to powder. It is a mightier agent that must melt it,—the fire of God's love, brought close by a will ablaze with the sacred glow.





CHAPTER III.



LANGUID church breeds unbelief as surely as a decaying oak fungus. In a condition of depressed vitality, the seeds of disease, which a full vigour would shake off, are fatal. Raise the temperature, and you kill the insect germs.

2. A warmer tone of spiritual life would change the atmosphere which unbelief needs for its growth. It belongs to the fauna of the glacial epoch, and when the rigours of that wintry time begin to melt, and warmer days to set in, the creatures of the ice have to retreat to arctic wildernesses, and leave a land no longer suited for their life.

3. If God's arm seems to slumber it is because we are asleep. His power is invariable, and the Gospel which is committed to our trust has lost none of its ancient power. If there be variations, they cannot be traced to the Divine element in the

church, which in itself is constant, but altogether to the human which shifts and fluctuates, as we only too sadly know. The light in the beacon tower is steady and the same; but the beam it throws across the water sometimes fades to a speck, and sometimes flames out clear and far across the heaving waves, according to the position of the glasses and shades around it. The sun pours out heat as profusely and as long on the 22nd of December as on Midsummer day, and all the difference between the frost and darkness and glowing brightness and flowering life, is simply owing to the earth's place in its orbit and angle at which the unalterable rays fall upon it. The changes are in the terrestrial sphere; the heavenly is fixed for ever the same.

4. We decline to dig up the piles of the bridge that carries us over the abyss because voices tell us that it is rotten. It is shorter and perfectly reasonable to answer: "Rotten, did you say? well we have tried it and it bears." We know in Whom we have believed.

5. As some warrior-king, himself roused from sleep and girded with flashing steel, bids the clarion sound through the grey twilight to summon the prostrate ranks that lie round his tent, so the sign of God's awaking, and the first act of His conquer-

ing might is this trumpet call—"The night is far spent, the day is at hand"—"put off the works of darkness," the night gear that was fit for slumber—"and put on the armour of light," the mail of purity that gleams and glitters even in the dim dawn.

6. There is no need to wait for anything more than we possess. Remember the homely old proverb, "You never know what you can do till you try," and though we are conscious of much unfitness, and would, sometimes, gladly wait till our limbs are stronger, let us brace ourselves for the work, assured that in it strength will be given to us that equals our desire.

7. There is too much work waiting, to suspend our activity till we have answered each denier. We do not hold our faith in the word of God as the winners of a match do their cups and belts, on condition of wrestling for them with any challenger.

8. There is a wonderful power in honest work to develop latent energies and reveal a man to himself. I suppose, in most cases, nobody is half so much surprised at a great man's greatest deeds as he is himself. They say that there is dormant electric energy enough to make a thunderstorm in a few rain drops, and there is dormant spiritual

force enough in the weakest of us to flush into beneficent light, and peal notes of awaking into many a deaf ear.

9. The effort to serve your Lord will *reveal* to you strength that you know not. And it will *increase* the strength which it brings into play, as the used muscles grow like whipcord, and the practised fingers become deft at their task, and every faculty employed is increased, and every gift wrapped in a napkin melts like ice folded in a cloth, according to that solemn law, "To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."

10. The confidence of ability is ability. "Screw your courage to the sticking place, and you will *not* fail."

11. We who labour in our great cities have to acknowledge that commercial prosperity and business cares, the eagerness after pleasure and the exigencies of political strife, diffused doubt and wide-spread artistic and literary culture, are eating the very life out of thousands in our churches, and lowering their fervour till, like molten iron cooling in the air, what was once all glowing with ruddy heat is crusted over with foul, black scoriæ, ever encroaching on the tiny, central warmth.

12. Christ's first disciples left Him once to agonise alone under the gnarled olives in Gethsemane, while they lay sleeping in the moonlight.

13. Our truest prayers are but the echo of God's promises. God's best answers are the echo of our prayers. As in two mirrors set opposite to each other, the same image is repeated over and over again, the reflection of a reflection, so here, within the prayer, gleams an earlier promise, within the answer is mirrored the prayer.

14. It is with us as with infants, the first sign of whose awaking is a cry. The mother's quick ear hears it through all the household noises, and the poor, little, troubled life, that woke to a scared consciousness of loneliness and darkness, is taken up into tender arms, and comforted and calmed. So, when we dimly perceive how torpid we have been, and start to find that we have lost our Father's hand, the first instinct of that waking, which must needs be partly painful, is to call to Him, whose ear hears our feeble cry amid the sound of praise, like the voice of many waters, that billows round His throne, and whose folding arms keep us as one whom his mother comforteth.

15. We have not to look back as from low-lying plains to the blue peaks on the horizon, across

which the church's path once lay, and sigh over changed conditions of the journey. The highest water-mark that the river in flood has ever reached will be reached and over-passed again, though to-day the waters may seem to have hopelessly subsided.

16. That which ascends as prayer descends as blessing, like the vapour that is drawn up by the kiss of the sun to fall in freshening rain.

17. You remember the old story, how when Jerusalem was in her hour of direst need, and the army of Babylon lay around her battered walls, the prophet was bid to buy "the field that is in Anathoth in the country of Benjamin," for a sign that the transient fury of the invader would be beaten back, that Israel might again dwell safely in the land. So with us, the hosts of our King's enemies come up like a river, strong and mighty; but all this world, held though it be by the usurper, is still "Thy land, O Immanuel," and over it all Thy peaceful rule shall be established.

18. Where is the joyful buoyancy and expansive power with which the Gospel burst into the world? It looks like some stream that leaps from the hills, and, at first, hurries from cliff to cliff full of light and music, but flows slower and more sluggish as it advances, and at last almost stagnates in its flat marshes.

19. It avails nothing that the ocean stretches shoreless to the horizon: a jar can only hold a jarful. The receiver's capacity determines the amount received, and the receiver's desire determines his capacity.

20. If we would lead to purer emotions, we must try to enter into the lower feelings which we labour to elevate. It is of no use to stand at the mouth of the alleys we wish to cleanse, with our skirts daintily gathered about us, and smelling-bottle in hand, to preach homilies on the virtues of cleanliness. We must go in among the filth, and handle it, if we want to have it cleared away.

21. The truth which a man or a generation requires most is the truth which he or they like least; and the true Christian teacher's adaptation of his message will consist quite as much in opposing the desires and contradicting the lies, as in seeking to meet the felt wants of the world. Nauseous medicines or sharp lancets are adapted to the sick man quite as truly as pleasant food and soothing ointment.

22. The reflection of Christ's triumphant consciousness of power should irradiate our spirits as we do His work, like the gleam from gazing on God's glory which shone on the lawgiver's stern face while he talked with men.

23. Mark how in us, as in our Lord, the sigh of compassion is connected with the look to heaven. It follows upon that gaze. The evils are more real, more terrible, by their startling contrast with the unshadowed light which lives above cloud-racks and mists. It is a sharp shock to turn from the free sweep of the heavens, starry and radiant, to the sights that meet us in "this dim spot which men call earth."

24. It is *glad* labour which is, ordinarily, productive labour—just as the growing time is the changeful April, and one knows not whether the promise of harvest is most sure in the clouds that drop fatness, or in the sunshine that makes their depths throb with whitest light, and touches the moist-springing blades into emeralds and diamonds.

25. Wherever men would help their fellows, this is a prime requisite, that the would-be helper should come down to the level of those whom he desires to aid. If we wish to teach, we must stoop to think the scholar's thoughts. The master who has forgotten his boyhood will have poor success.

26. Here on the one hand is the boundless ocean of the Divine Strength, unfathomable in its depth, full after all draughts, tideless and calm, in all its movements never troubled, in all its repose never

stagnating; and on the other side is the empty avidity of our poor, weak natures. Faith opens these to the impulse of that great sea, and "according to our faith," in the exact measure of our receptivity, does it enter our hearts.

27. Faith is the true anæsthesia of the soul; and the knife may cut into the quivering flesh, and the spirit be scarce conscious of a pang.

28. Love, ambition, and all the swarm of distracting desires will be driven from the soul in which the lamp of faith burns bright. Ordinary human motives will appeal in vain to the ears which have heard the tones of the heavenly music, and all the pomps of life will show poor and tawdry to the sight that has gazed on the vision of the great white throne and the crystal sea.

29. Some seeds are put to steep and swell in water, that they may be tested before sowing. The seed which we sow will not germinate unless it be saturated with our tears.

30. As the diver in his bell sits at the bottom of the sea, and draws a pure air from the free heavens far above him, and is parted from that murderous waste of green death that clings so closely round the translucent crystal walls that keep him safe; so we, enclosed in God, shall repel from ourselves

all that would overflow to destroy us and our work, and may by His grace lay deeper than the waters some courses in the great building that shall one day rise, stately and many-mansioned, from out of the conquered waves.

31. For us, too, when the shadow of our cross lies black and gaunt upon our paths, and our souls are troubled, communion with heaven will bring the assurance, audible to our ears at least, that God will glorify Himself even in us.

32. They predict the harvests in Egypt by the height which the river marks on the gauge of the inundation. So many feet there represents so much fertility. Tell me the depth of a Christian man's compassion, and I will tell you the measure of his fruitfulness.

33. "The help which is done upon earth He doeth it all Himself." We and our organisations are but the channels through which His might is poured; and if we choke the bed with turbid masses of drift and heavy rocks of earthly thoughts, or build from bank to bank thick dams of worldliness compact with slime of sin, how shall the full tide flow through us for the healing of the salt and barren places? Will it not leave its former course silted up with sand, and cut for itself new outlets,

while the useless quays that once rang with busy life stand silent, and "the cities are solitary that were full of people"?

34. Machinery saves manual toil, and multiplies force. But we may have too heavy machinery for what engineers call the boiler power—too many wheels and shafts for the steam we have to drive them with. What we want is not less organisation or other sorts of it, but more force.

35. Feverish activity rules in all spheres of life. The iron wheels of the car which bears the modern idol of material progress whirl fast, and crush remorselessly all who cannot keep up the pace.

36. Loose-braced, easy souls, that lie open to all the pleasurable influences of ordinary life, are no more fit for God's weapons than a reed for a lance, or a bit of flexible lead for a spear-point. The wood must be tough and compact, the metal hard and close-grained, out of which God makes His shafts. The brand that is to guide men through the darkness to their Father's home must glow with a pallor of consuming flame that purges its whole substance into light.

37. The solemn words which shine like stars—starlike in that their height above us shrinks their magnitude and dims their brightness, and in that

they are points of radiance partially disclosing, and separated by, abysses of unlighted infinitude—tell us that, in the order of eternity, before creatures were, there was communion, for “the word was with God,” and there was unity, for “the word was God.”

38. If we would give sight to the blind, we must ourselves be gazing into heaven. Only when we testify of that which we see, as one might who, standing in a beleagured city, discerned on the horizon the filmy dust-cloud through which the spearheads of the deliverers flashed at intervals, shall we win any to gaze with us till they, too, behold and know themselves set free.

39. Unbelief has a contagious energy wholly independent of reason, no less than has faith, and affects multitudes who know nothing of its grounds, as the iceberg chills the summer air for leagues, and makes the sailors shiver long before they see its barren peaks.

40. We have ever need to refresh the drooping flowers of the chaplet by bathing them in the Fountain of Life, to rise above all the fevered toil of earth to the calm heights where God dwells, and, in still communion with Him, to replenish our emptied vessels and fill our dimly-burning lamps with His golden oil.

41. If our faith is to grow high and bear rich clusters on the topmost boughs that look up to the sky, we must keep the wild lower shoots close nipped. Without rigid self-control and self-humiliation, no vigorous faith.

42. Hands that are full of gilded toys and glass beads cannot grasp durable riches, and eyes that have been accustomed to glaring lights see only darkness when they look up to the violet heaven with all its stars.

43. It may suit observers who have never done anything themselves, and have not particularly clear eyes for appreciating spiritual work, to talk of Christian missions as failures ; but it would ill become us to assent to the lie. Is the green life in the hedges and in the sweet pastures starred with rather primroses, and in the hidden copses blue with hyacinths, a failure, because the east wind bites shrewdly, and "the tender ash delays to clothe herself with green"?

44. No matter what may be the superficial differences of dress, the same human heart beats beneath every robe.

45. Let us be glad when "the things which can be shaken are removed," like mean huts built against the wall of some cathedral, masking and marring the completeness of its beauty ; "that the things which

cannot be shaken may remain," and all the clustered shafts, and deep-arched recesses, and sweet tracery may stand forth freed from the excrescences which hid them.

46. The stream that is to flow broad and life-giving through many lands must have its hidden source high among the pure snows that cap the mount of God. The man that would work for God must live with God.

47. Modern astronomy begins to believe that the sun itself, by long expense of light, will be shorn of its beams and wander darkling in space, circled no more by its daughter planets. But the Sun of our souls rays out for ever the energies of life and light and love, and after all communication possesses the infinite fulness of them all.

48. There is such a thing as the very perfection of arrangement without life, like cabinets in a museum, where all the specimens are duly classified and dead.

49. I believe with the old preacher, that if God can do without our learning, He needs our ignorance still less; but it is of comparatively little importance whether the draught of living water be

brought to thirsty lips in an earthen cup or a golden vase.

“The main thing is, does it hold good measure?
Heaven soon sets right all other matters.”

50. How possible it is for us to have our faith all honey-combed by gnawing doubt while we suspect it not, like some piece of wood apparently sound, the whole substance of which has been eaten away by hidden worms.

51. The most ignorant and erroneous “religious sentiment”—to use a modern phrase—is mightier than all other forces in the world’s history. It is like some of those terrible compounds of modern chemistry, an inert, innocuous-looking drop of liquid. Shake it, and it flames heaven high, shattering the rocks and ploughing up the soil. Put even an adulterated and carnalised faith into the hearts of a mob of wild Arabs, and, in a century, they will stream from their deserts, and blaze from the mountains of Spain to the plains of Bengal.

52. The arrow may be keen and true, the shaft round and straight, the bow strong, and the arm sinewy ; but unless the steel be winged it will fall to the ground long before it strikes the butt. Your arrows must be winged with faith, else orthodoxy, and wise arrangements, and force, and zeal, will avail nothing.

53. While we aim at the utmost possible perfection in all subordinate matters, let us remember that they all without faith are weak, as an empty suit of armour with no life beneath the corslet; and that faith without them all is strong, like the knight of old, who rode into the bloody field in silken vest and conquered.

54. The low foot-hills that lie at the base of some Alpine country may look high when seen from the plain, as long as the snowy summits are wrapped in mist, but when a little puff of wind comes and clears away the fog from the lofty peaks, nobody looks at the little green hills in front. So the world's hindrances, and the world's difficulties and cares, they look very lofty till the cloud lifts. And when we see the great, white summits, everything lower does not seem so very high after all. Look to Jesus, and that will dwarf the difficulties.

55. Life, at first, may seem gay and brilliant, a place for recreation or profit or pleasure, but we very soon find out that it is a sand-strewn wrestling ground. Many flowers cannot grow where are the feet of the runner and the strife of the combatants. The first thing done to make an arena for wrestlers is to take away the turf and the daisies, then to beat the soil down hard and flat. And so our lives get flattened, stripped of their beauty and their fragrance,

because they are not meant to be gardens, they are meant to be wrestling grounds.

56. A life of faith, a life of effort to keep ever before us the unseen crown, will be a life noble and lofty. We are ever tempted to forget it. The "man with the muck-rake" in John Bunyan's homely parable was so occupied with the foul-smelling dungheap that he thought a treasure, that he had no eyes for the crown hanging a hair's-breadth over his head. A hair's-breadth? Yes? And yet the distance was as great as if the universe had laid between.

57. Men in this world win their objects or lose them. Whether is it better to creep, like the old mariners, from headland to headland, altering your course every day or two, or strike boldly out into the great deep, steering for an unseen port on the other side of the world that you never beheld, though you know it is there? Which will be the nobler voyage?

58. There are hosts of difficulties in our lives as Christian men, which will be big or little, just as we choose to make them. You can either look at them through a magnifying or diminishing glass. The magnitude of most of the trifles that affect us may be altered by our way of looking at them.

59. There are, seaweeds that lie down at the bottom of the sea, but when their flowering time comes, they lengthen their stalks, and reach the light and float upon the top, and, when they have flowered and fruited, they sink again into the depths. Our Christian life should come up to the surface, and open out its flowers there, and show them to the heavens, and to all eyes that look.

60. "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone." What a contrast between that condition of mind and the gentle, gracious power which, like the dew, is distilled into the soul by the influences of the Spirit of God. The one is like the frowning cliffs which front the wild Polar ocean, white with ice and black with barren rock; the other like the limestone walls, that keep back the Mediterranean, green and flowery to the water's edge—a barrier as complete, but all draped with beauty, and fruitful and sunny.

61. We are apt to look back to Pentecost, and think that that marked a height to which the tide has never reached since, and therefore we are stranded amidst the ooze and mud. But the river which proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb is not like one of our streams on earth, that leaps to the light and dashes rejoicingly down the hill-side, but creeps along sluggish in its level course, and

dies away at last in the sands. It pours along the ages the same full volume with which it gushed forth at first.

62. The mists of gathering ages wrap in slowly-thickening folds of forgetfulness all other men and events in history, and make them ghostlike and shadowy ; but no distance has yet dimmed or will ever dim that human form divine. Other names are like those stars that blaze out for a while, and then smoulder down into almost complete invisibility ; but Christ is the very Light itself, that burns and is not consumed. Other landmarks sink below the horizon as the tribes of men pursue their solemn march through the centuries, but the cross on Calvary "shall stand for an ensign of the people, and to it shall the Gentiles seek."

63. Christ could not, if He would, take a man to His right hand whose heart was not the home of simple trust and thankful love, whose nature and desires were unprepared for that blessed world. It would be like taking one of those creatures—if there be such—that live on the planet whose orbit is farthest from the sun, accustomed to cold, organised for darkness, and carrying it to that great central blaze, with all its fierce flames and tongues of fiery gas that show up a thousand miles in a

moment. It would crumble and disappear before its blackness could be seen against the blaze.

64. As the sun behind a cloud, which hides it from us, is still pouring out its rays on far-off lands, so Christ, veiled in dark, sunset clouds of Calvary, sent the energy of His passion and cross into the unseen world, and made it possible that we should enter there.

65. As one who precedes a mighty host, provides and prepares rest for their weariness, and food for their hunger, in some city on their line of march, and having made all things ready, is at the gates to welcome their travel-stained ranks when they arrive, and guide them to their repose; so Christ has gone before, our Forerunner, to order all things for us *there*.

66. As in the heavens there be planets that roll nearer and nearer the central sun, and others that circle farther out from its rays, yet each keeps its course, and makes music as it moves, as well as planets whose broader disc can receive and reflect more of the light than the smaller sister spheres, and yet each blazes over its whole surface, and is full to its very rim with white light; so, round *that* throne the spirits of the just made perfect shall circle in order and peace—every one blessed, every

one perfect, every one like Christ to begin with, and becoming liker through every moment of the eternities.

67. There are plenty of people who think that the felicities of the heavenly world are dependent solely on Christ's arbitrary will and can be bestowed by an exercise of mere power, as an eastern prince may make this man his vizier and that other one his water-carrier.

68. When a pauper becomes a millionaire by sitting and vehemently wishing that he were rich, when ignorance becomes learning by standing in a library and wishing that the contents of all these books were in its head, there will be some hope that the gates of heaven will fly open to your desires.

69. It is possible for a man to carry the freshness, the buoyancy, the elastic cheerfulness, the joyful hope of his earliest days, right on through the monotony of middle-aged maturity, and even into old age, shadowed by the lovely reflection of the tones which the setting sun casts over the path.

70. We are meant to gladden, to adorn, to refresh this parched, prosaic world, with a freshness brought from the chambers of the Sunrise.

71. The dew, formed in the silence of the darkness while men sleep, falling as willingly on a bit of dead wood as anywhere, hanging its pearls on every poor spike of grass, and dressing everything on which it lies with strange beauty, each separate globule tiny and evanescent, but each flashing back the light, and each a perfect sphere, feeble one by one, but united mighty to make the pastures of the wilderness rejoice—so, created in silence by an unseen influence, feeble when taken in detail, but strong in their myriads, glad to occupy the lowliest place, and each “bright with something of celestial light,” Christian men and women are to be “in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord.”

72. Some of us feel that we are shut in by immense and sovereign power which we cannot oppose. And yet, like some raging rebel in a dungeon, or some fluttering bird in a cage, we beat ourselves all bruised and bloody against the bars in vain attempts at liberty, alternating with fits of cowed apathy as we slink into a corner of our cell.

73. As in the old Saxon monarchies, the monarch's domestics were nobles, the men of Christ's household are ennobled by their service.

74. We cannot scold nor dragoon men to love Jesus Christ. We cannot drive them into the fold

with dogs and sticks. We are to be gentle, long-suffering, not doing our work with passion and self-will, but remembering that gentleness is mightiest, and that we shall best adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour when we go among men with the light caught in the inner sanctuary still irradiating our faces, and our hands full of blessings to bestow on our brethren. We are to be soldier-priests, strong and gentle, like the ideal of those knights of old who were both, and bore the cross on shield and helmet and sword-hilt.

75. We cloak our sins from ourselves with many wrappings, as they swathe a mummy in voluminous folds.

76. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared disciplining"—and His hand is never more gentle than when it plucks away the films with which we hide our sins from ourselves, and shows us the "rottenness and dead men's bones" beneath the whited walls of the sepulchres and the velvet of the coffins.

77. What matters it though we float in the great ocean of the Divine Love, if with pitch and canvas we have carefully closed every aperture at which the flood can enter? A hermetically closed

jar, plunged in the Atlantic, will be as dry inside as if it were lying on the sand of the desert.

78. Every pleading of Christ's grace, whether by providences, or by books, or by His own word does something with us. It is never vain. Either it melts or it hardens. The sun either scatters the summer morning mists, or it rolls them into heavier folds, from whose livid depths the lightning is flashing by mid-day.

79. We shall never see the glory of that light which dwells between the cherubim if our visits to the shrine are brief and interrupted, and the bulk of our time is spent outside the tabernacle amidst the glaring sand and the blazing sunshine.

80. No short swallow-flights of soul will ever carry us to the serene height where God dwells. It is the eagle, with steady, unflagging flaps of his broad pinion, and open-eyed gaze upwards, that rises "close to the sun, in lonely lands," and leaves all the race of short-winged and weak-sighted twitterers far below.

81. God does not lose the details in the whole; as we, looking on some great crowd of upturned faces, are unconscious of all, but recognise no single one.

82. The heart vibrates most readily in answer to gentle touches, the conscience in answer to heavier, as the breath that wakes the chords of an *Æolian* harp would pass silent through the brass of a trumpet.

83. As the sunshine pours down as willingly and abundantly on filth and dunghills as on gold that glitters in its beam, and jewels that flash back its lustre, so the light and warmth of that unsetting and unexhausted source of life pours down "on the unthankful and on the good." The great ocean clasps some black and barren crag that frowns against it as closely as with its waves it kisses some fair strand enamelled with flowers and fragrant with perfumes. So that sea of love in which we live, and move, and have our being, encircles the worst with abundant flow.

84. The love of Christ has to come to sinful men with patient pleading and remonstrance, that it may enter their hearts and give its blessings. Some of you may remember a modern work of art in which that long-suffering appeal is wonderfully portrayed. He who is the Light of the world stands, girded with the royal mantle clasped with the priestly breastplate, bearing in His hand the lamp of truth, and there, amidst the dew of night and the rank hemlock, He pleads for entrance at the closed door

which has no handle on its outer side, and is hinged to open only from within. "I stand at the door and knock. If any man open the door I will come in."

85. Our gaze upon Christ is to be like that of a man who resolutely turns away his eyes from other things, to fix them, with keen interest and eagerness, with protracted, steady look, on something which he is resolved to learn thoroughly.

86. "Looking unto Jesus." That conveys the same idea of rigid shutting out of other things in order that one supreme light may fill the eye and gladden the soul. If you do not carefully drop black curtains round the little chamber, and exclude all side lights, as well as all other objects from the field of vision, there will be no clear impression of the beloved face made upon the sensitive plate. It must be in the darkness that the image is transferred to the heart.

87. No man can see the beauty of a country as he hurries through it in a train. It is only when we sit still and gaze till all the landscape sinks into our souls, and we are steeped in it, that its fairness is revealed to us.

88. No man makes progress in any branch of human thought or science without this first condition—the habit of pinning himself down wholly to the

subject in hand, and rigidly restraining all wandering thoughts. You must bring your instrument to a point before it will penetrate, to an edge that it may cut—and only firm concentration of oneself on the matter before us will do that ; and if that be true of regions of thought; where men willingly resort, and from which no reluctance of heart draws them back, how much more true it must be of that region to which our heavy souls are averse to rise, and whose pure, keen air it is hard for our lungs to breathe?

89. If on the wild stock of our sinful nature a better life has been budded, we have to take care that the energy of our souls does not waste itself in vagrant shoots, that bear only scentless, wild flowers ; and that we prune close and unsparingly our wandering thoughts, our earthly desires, else we shall bear no fragrant blossoms.

90. A hurried glance is as profitless as a careless one. You do not see much on first going into a dark room out of the light ; nor do you see much on first going into the light out of the dark. When a man steps for a hasty moment out of the bright, sunny market-place, with all its gay colouring, into the cool, dark cathedral, he sees but dimly the still figures above the altar, and the subdued splendour of stained glass and sculptured shrines ; and if he rushes back to the outside glare before his eyes become accustomed

to the obscurity, he will bear away but a vague impression of confused richness and have nothing definite to remember.

91. Alas! how little of this patient, prolonged concentration of interested thought on our dear Lord do even the best and devoutest of us employ! And as for the ordinary Christian life of this day—what a sad contrast does it present to such an ideal! It was Newton, I think, who, when asked as to his method of working in attacking complicated problems, had only the simple answer to give, “I keep it before me.”

92. To one man, looking out on the world almost as a beast might look, nothing appears wonderful, nothing great; to another, “every common sight” bears “the glory and the freshness of a dream,” and seems “apparelled in celestial light.” To one man, looking up with lack-lustre, stolid gaze, the stars are but so many shining points, laid flat on a flat arch; to another, they are spheres immeasurable and multitudinous, set in violet depths, which imagination cannot fly across, or thought fathom; and as the earth and the heavens vary according to the eye that looks upon them, so does Christ vary. “Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by?” The careless glance sees nought even in that unparalleled sorrow—while some who gaze

are bowed in grief, and some are smitten with penitence, and angels are filled with wonder.

93. We stand together in the secret place of thunder, we stand together before the fountal source of light. Some of us hear but an inarticulate rumbling above the clouds, while others hear the very speech of God. Some of us see but a formless brightness, where others behold Him who is the master-light of all our seeing.

94. Christ was a miser of the moments, and carefully husbanding and garnering up every capacity and every opportunity, He toiled with the toil of a man who has a task before him, that must be done when the clock strikes six, and who sees the hands move over the dial, and by every glance that he casts at it is stimulated to intenser service and to harder toil.

95. There is a fatal monotony in all our lives—a terrible amount of hard drudgery in them all. We have to set ourselves morning after morning to tasks that look to be utterly insignificant and disproportionate to the power that we bring to bear upon them—like elephants picking up pins with their trunks; and yet we may make all our commonplace drudgery great, and wondrous, and fair, and full of help and profit to our souls, if, over it all—

our shops, our desks, our ledgers, our studies, our kitchens, and our nurseries—we write, “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me.”

96. Our most troubled utterances of sore need, our sighs and groans, should be accompanied with faith which feels the summer's sun of joy even in the mid-winter of our pain, and sees vineyards in the desert.

97. Blossoms and flowers will come again, however untimely frosts have burned the young leaves into brown powder. No sorrow is so crushing and hopeless but that happiness may again visit the heart, where trust and love abide.

98. Cisterns may be broken, but the fountain cannot be choked up with their ruins.

99. The yawning emptiness of our parched hearts, thirsting for God, like the cracked ground in drought, is a plea with Him.

100. It cannot but be that he who calls on God will be answered. Anything is credible rather than that our prayer ascending should be flung back unanswered, as if it had struck against heavens which were brass.



CHAPTER IV.



WID any of you, parents, ever hear your child wake from sleep, with some panic fear, and shriek the mother's name through the darkness? Was not that a more powerful appeal than all words? And, depend upon it, that the soul which cries aloud on God, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," though it have "no language but a cry," will never call in vain.

2. There is an act of loving will which is most clearly conveyed by that strong, and yet plain and intelligible, metaphor, "*Bow down* thine ear," as an eager listener puts his hand to his ear and bends the lobe of it in the direction of the sound.

3. There are two methods of lightening a burden—one is to diminish the load, the other is to

strengthen the shoulders that carry it. The latter is often the more blessed—and often the shape in which God answers our prayer. “For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee.”

4. The great man and all his cortége are kept outside, and God’s servant will not even come out, but sends the message, “Go and wash in Jordan.” That uncourtly reception is no piece of vulgar arrogance, like the pride of a pope that keeps an emperor standing in the snow in the castle-yard for three days before he will absolve him.

5. Are we going to stand upon our miserable tiny mole-hills beneath those solemn stars far above us and say—“Their light ought to fall upon us in another fashion from what it does on those people that live a little lower down?”

6. It is the same air which vivifies all men’s blood, the same light which gleams in all men’s eyes, the same Gospel which saves all men’s souls.

7. As the same blood is repeatedly driven through the veins by the contraction and dilating of the heart, so all true prayer will flow forth over and over again, as the spirit opens in yearning, and closes itself in calm fruition on the grace it has

received, and then dilates again in longing and sense of need.

8. Wherever God's grace is discerned, and His love is welcomed, there praise breaks forth, as surely as streams pour from the cave of the glacier when the sun of summer melts it, or earth answers the touch of spring with flowers.

9. Our sorrows are never so great that they hide our mercies. The sky is never covered with clouds so that neither sun nor stars appear for many days.

10. The winter's day has had its melancholy grey sky, with many a bitter dash of snow and rain—but it has stormed itself out, and at eventide a rent in the clouds reveals the sun, and it closes in peaceful clearness of night.

11. The harps of heaven are hushed to hear *their* praise who can sing, "Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood."

12. "But he was a leper." There is a *but* in every man's fortunes, because there is a *but* in every man's character.

13. The first and second Psalms are obviously intended as a kind of double introduction to the

whole Psalter. We might call them the frontispiece and vignette to the book.

14. *There*, on the right hand, are the flowery slopes of the mount of blessing ; *there*, on the left, the barren, stern, thunder-riven, lightning-splintered pinnacles of the mount of cursing. Every clear note of benediction hath its low minor of imprecation from the other side. Between the two, overhung by the hopes of the one, and frowned upon and dominated by the threatenings of the other, is pitched the little camp of our human life, and the path of our pilgrimage runs in the trough of the valley between. And yet—might I not go a step farther, and say that above the parted summits stretches the one over-arching blue, uniting them both, and their roots deep down below the surface interlace and twine together.

15. God's love can no more fall on rebellious hearts than the pure crystals of the snow can lie and sparkle on the hot, black cone of a volcano.

16. A great botanist made what he called "a floral clock," to mark the hours of the day by the opening and closing of flowers. It was a graceful, and yet a pathetic, thought. One after another they spread their petals, and their varying colours glow in the light. But one after another they

wearily shut their cups, and the night falls, and the latest of them folds itself together, and all are hidden away in the dark. So our joys and treasures, were they sufficient did they last, cannot last. After a summer's day comes a summer's night, and after a brief space of them comes winter, when all are killed, and the leafless trees stand silent—

“Bare, ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.”

17. If we live for Christ, the power of that motive will make all our nature blossom like the vernal woods, and dry branches break into leafage. If we dwell in Him, we shall be at home wherever we are, like the patriarch who pitched his tent in many lands, but always had the same tent wherever he went.

18. Christ was as unsafe when He went up to Jerusalem as John Huss when he went to the Council of Constance with the Emperor's safe-conduct in his belt ; or as a condemned heretic would have been in the old days, if he had gone and stood in that little dingy square outside the palace of the Inquisition at Rome, and there, below the obelisk, preached his heresies.

19. As we may say, every time Christ planted His foot on the flinty path the blood flowed. Every

step was a pain like that of a man enduring the ordeal and walking on burning iron or sharp steel.

20. Notwithstanding the black barrier which we have flung across the stream by our sin, the pure and deep flood of the love of God shall rise and surge over the impediment, and fill our souls.

21. Every man, by every sinful act, carries a coal to the hell-fire that may have to consume him.

22. No multiplication of *times* will make eternity.

23. Every other creature presents the most accurate correspondence between nature and circumstances, powers and occupations. Man alone is like some poor land-bird blown out to sea, and floating half-drowned with clinging plumage on an ocean where the dove "finds no rest for the sole of her foot," or like some creature that loves to glance in the sunlight, but is plunged into the deepest recesses of a dark mine.

24. Is it not true that, deep below the surface contentment with the world and the things of the world, a dormant, but lightly slumbering sense of want and unsatisfied need lies in your souls? Is it not true that it wakes sometimes at a touch; that the tender, dying light of sunset, or the calm abysses of the mighty heavens, or some strain of music, or

a line in a book, or a sorrow in your heart, or the solemnity of a great joy, or close contact with sickness and death, or the more direct appeals of Scripture and of Christ, stir a wistful yearning and a painful sense of emptiness in your hearts, and of insufficiency in all the ordinary pursuits of your lives?

25. The thought of Eternity is in us all—a presentiment and a consciousness; and that universal presentiment itself goes far to establish the reality of the unseen order of things to which it is directed. The great planet that moves on the outmost circle of our system was discovered because that next it wavered in its course in a fashion which was inexplicable, unless some unknown mass was attracting it from across millions of miles of darkling space. And there are “perturbations” in our spirits which cannot be understood, unless from them we may divine that far-off and unseen world, that has power from afar to sway in their orbits the little lives of mortal men.

26. You have need of God, and, whether you know it or not, the tendrils of your spirits, like some climbing plant, not fostered by a careful hand but growing wild, are feeling out into the vacancy in order to grasp the stay which they need for their fruitage and their strength.

27. The contexture of life, and even the perplexities and darkness of human society, and the varieties of earthly condition—if they be confined within their own proper limits, and regarded as parts of a whole—they are all co-operant to an end. As from wheels turning different ways in some great complicated machine, and yet fitting by their cogs into one another, there may be a resultant direct motion produced even by these apparently antagonistic forces.

28. I know what Eternity is, though I cannot define the word to satisfy a metaphysician. The little child taught by some grandmother Lois, in a cottage, knows what she means when she tells him “you will live for ever,” though both scholar and teacher would be puzzled to put it into other words.

29. Men may so plunge themselves into the present as to lose the consciousness of the Eternal—as a man swept over Niagara, blinded by the spray, and deafened by the rush, would see or hear nothing of the death that encompassed him. And yet the blue sky with its peaceful spaces stretches above the hell of waters.

30. “Our *Father*” forgives us: Let us keep fast by that. And, then, let us remember our own childhood, our children, if we have any, and how

we do with them. What makes the little face fall and the tears come to the eyes? Is it your taking down the rod from behind the door, or the grave disapprobation in your face, and the trouble and rebuke in your eyes? It is not only the buffet from the father's hand that makes the punishment, but still more the disturbance and the displeasure of the father's heart that makes the child's punishment. And forgiveness is not complete when the father says, "Well; go away, I will not hurt you," but when he says, "Well, come, I am not angry with you, and I love you still." Not putting up the rod, but taking your child to your heart is your forgiveness. So long as the faintest trace of disturbance of the father's love by pain or disapprobation remains, so long as one fragment of the fault stands like the broken timbers of a dam to block the stream, so long the child is not pardoned. He is forgiven when the last thin film of mist between him and his father has faded away. And the Heavenly Father seals His pardon to us when He declares, "I have blotted out, as a cloud, thy sins."

31. They that went before do not prevent us on whom the ends of the ages are come. The table that was spread for them is as fully furnished for the latest guests. The light, which was so magical and lustrous in the morning beauty, for us has not

faded away into the light of common day. The river which flowed in these past ages has not been drunk up by the thirsty sands. The fire that once blazed so clear has not died down into grey ashes.

32. No matter what tempests assail us, the wind will but sweep the rotten branches out of the tree.

33. As in war they will clear away the houses and the flower-gardens that have been allowed to come and cluster about the walls and fill up the moat, yet the walls will stand ; so in all the conflicts that befall Christ's church and God's truth, the calming thought ought to be ours : if anything perishes it is a sign that it is not His, but man's excrescence on His building. Whatever is His will stand for ever.

34. Discipline submitted to is, if I may so say, like that great apparatus which you find by the side of an astronomer's biggest telescope, to wheel it upon its centre and to point its tube to the star on which he would look. So our anticipation and desire, the faculty of expectation which we have, is wont to be directed along the low level of earth, and it needs the pinions and levers of that gracious discipline, making us sober, righteous, godly, in

order to heave it upwards, full-front against the sky, that the stars may shine into it.

35. "Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind." The metaphor is that of a ship like a great, unwieldy galleon, caught in a tempest. However strong for fight, it is not fit for sailing. Like some of those turret ships of ours, if they venture out from the coast and get into a storm, their very strength is their destruction, their armour wherein they trusted ensures that they shall sink.

36. We are ever tempted to think of the present as commonplace. The sky is always farthest from earth right above our heads. It is at the horizon behind, and the horizon in front, where earth and heaven seem to blend.

37. Is it true of us that into our hearts there steals subtle, impalpable, but quickening as the land breeze laden with the fragrance of flowers to the sailor tossing on the barren sea, a hidden but yet mighty hope of an inheritance with Christ—when He shall appear?

38. It is with us as with the people in some rude country fair and scene of riot, where the booths, and the shows, and the drinking-places are pitched upon the edge of the common, and one step from the braying of the trumpets brings you into the

solemn stillness of the night, and high above the stinking glare of the oil lamps there is the pure light of the stars in the sky, and not one amongst the many clowns that are stumbling about in the midst of sensual dissipation ever looks up to see that calm home that is arched above them.

39. The speculum, the object-glass, must be polished and cut by many a stroke and much friction ere it will reflect "the image of the heavenly;" so grace disciplines us, patiently, slowly, by repeated strokes, by much rubbing, by much pain, and then the cleared eye beholds the heavens, and the purged heart grows towards "the coming" as its hope and its life.

40. "As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." I was reading, a day or two ago, one of our last books of travels in the wilderness of the Exodus, in which the writer told how, after toiling for hours under a scorching sun, over the hot, white, marly flat, seeing nothing but a beetle or two on the way, and finding no shelter anywhere from the pitiless beating of the sunshine, the three travellers came at last to a little Retem bush only a few feet high; and flung themselves down and tried to hide, at least, their heads, from those "sunbeams like swords," even beneath its ragged shade. And my text tells of a great rock, with blue dimness in its

shadow, with haply a fern or two in the moist places of its crevices, where there is rest, and a man can lie down and be cool, while all outside is burning sun, and burning sand, and dancing mirage.

41. "And so the word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought."
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42. There is no depth in a Chinese picture because there is no shade. It is the wrinkles and marks of tear and wear that make the expression in a man's portrait. "Life's sternest painter is the best."

43. We live a life defenceless and exposed to many a storm and tempest. I need but remind you of the adverse circumstances—the wild winds that go sweeping across the flat level, the biting blasts that come down from the snow-clad mountains of destiny that lie round the low plain on which we live. And I need but remind you of that last wild wind of Death, that whirls the sin-faded leaves into dark corners, where they lie and rot.

44. You have not lived thus long without learning that though, blessed be God! there do come in all our lives long periods of halcyon rest,

when "birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed wave," and the heavens above are clear as sapphire, and the sea around is transparent as opal—yet the little cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, may rise on the horizon, and may thicken and blacken, and grow greater and nearer till all the sky is dark, and burst in lightning, and rain, and fierceness of wind, till "through the torn sail the wild tempest is streaming," and the white crests of the waves are like the mane of Death's pale horse leaping upon the broken ship.

45. The Gospel proclaims and produces no fantastic ethics of its own. The actions which it stamps in its mint are those which pass current in all lands—not a provincial coinage, but recognised as true in ring, and of full weight everywhere.

46. Do not fancy that Christian righteousness is different from ordinary "goodness," except as being broader and deeper, more thorough-going, more imperative. The precepts of the one, like some rock-hewn inscriptions by forgotten kings, are weathered and indistinct, often illegible, often misread, often neglected. The other is written in living characters in a perfect life.

47. You cannot gird on "righteousness" above the old self, as some beggar might buckle to himself

royal velvet with its ermine over his filthy tatters. There must be a putting off in order to and accompanying the putting on.

48. Every life has dark tracts and long stretches of sombre tint, and no representation is true to fact which dips its pencil only in light, and flings no shadows on the canvas.

49. You will sometimes see a wounded animal licking its wounds with its own tongue. How much more hopeless still is our effort by our own power to staunch and heal the gashes which sin has made.

50. I remember a rough parable of Luther's, grafted on an older legend, which runs somewhat in this fashion:—A man's heart is like a foul stable. Wheelbarrows and shovels are of little use, except to remove some of the surface filth, and to litter all the passages in the process. What is to be done with it? "Turn the Elbe into it," says he. The flood will sweep away all the pollution. Not my own efforts, but the influx of that pardoning, cleansing grace which is in Christ will wash away the accumulations of years, and the ingrained evil which has stained every part of my being.

51. It is useless to build dykes to keep out the wild waters. Somewhere or other they will find a way through. The only real cure is that which

only the Creating hand can effect, who, by slow operation of some inward agency, can raise the level of the low lands, and lift them above the threatening waves.

52. Beware of the slightest deflection from the straight line of right. If there be two lines, one straight and the other going off at the sharpest angle, you have only to produce both far enough, and there will be room between them for all the space that separates hell from heaven.

53. We heap upon ourselves, by slow, steady accretion through a lifetime, the weight that, though it is gathered by grains, crushes the soul. There is nothing heavier than sand. You may lift it by particles. It drifts in atoms, but heaped upon a man, it will break his bones, and blown over the land it buries pyramid and sphynx, the temples of gods and the homes of men beneath its barren, solid waves.

54. Our days are full of foiled resolutions, attempts that have broken down, unsuccessful rebellions, ending like the struggles of some snared wild creature, in wrapping the meshes tighter round us.

55. There is no power in human nature to cast off this clinging self. As in the awful

vision of the poet, the serpent is grown into the man.

56. Whoever takes it for his law to do as he likes will not for long like what he does. Or, as George Herbert says :—

“Shadows well mounted, dreams in a career,
Embroidered lies, nothing between two dishes—
These are the pleasures here.”

57. Do any of you remember the mournful words with which one of our greatest modern writers of fiction closes his saddest, truest book : “Ah ! *vanitas vanitatum* ! Which of us is happy in this world ? which of us has his desire ? or, having it, is satisfied ?” No wonder that with such a view of human life as that, the next and last sentence should be, “Come, children, let us shut up the box and the puppets, for the play is played out.”

58. In all regions of life exercise strengthens capacity. The wrestler, according to the old Greek parable, who began by carrying a calf on his shoulders, got to carry an ox by and by.

59. If a doctor knows that he can cure a disease, he can afford to give full weight to its gravest symptoms. If he knows he cannot, he is sorely tempted to say it is of slight importance, and, though it cannot be cured, can be endured without much

discomfort. And so the Scripture teachings about man's real moral condition are characterised by two peculiarities which, at first sight, seem somewhat opposed, but are really harmonious and closely connected. There is no book and no system in the whole world that takes such a dark view of what you and I are ; there is none animated with so bright and confident a hope of what you and I may become.

60. There are certain diseases of which a constant symptom is unconsciousness that there is anything the matter. A deep-seated wound does not hurt much.

61. Which is the gloomy system ? That which paints in undisguised blackness the facts of life, and over against their blackest darkness the radiant light of a great hope shining bright and glorious, or one that paints humanity in a uniform monotone of indistinguishable grey, involving the past, the present and the future—which, believing in no disease, hopes for no cure ?

62. We shall know Christ by getting like Him. The water of life takes the shape of the containing vessel, but it has likewise the property of dilating the spirit into which it flows, and, by fruition, enlarging capacity, and hence kindling desire. The sun shines upon the sensitive plate, and an image of the sun is photographed there.

63. As a man writes his name upon the fly-leaf of his books, or stamps his initials on his valuables, so Christ gives His name in token of proprietorship, and builds on that fact at once the assurance of protection and the demand for service.

64. "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus," and the letters which are here burned in by hot irons will yonder be filled with lustrous gold, and the ownership which on earth was testified by suffering will in heaven be manifested in glory.

65. When our wills go in the direction of Christ's purposes, then they are His in so far as the touch of His finger upon the keys in the heavens moves the tremulous needles of our volitions upon the earth.

66. The sun remains the same, but as different as its sphere looks, seen from the comet at its aphelion, away out far beyond the orbits of the planets in the dim regions of that infinite abyss, and seen from the same orb at its perihelion when it circles round close by the burning brightness; so different does that mighty Sun of Righteousness look to us now in His eternal self-revelation, by sacrifice and death, from what He will seem in that same self-revelation when we shall stand by His side.

67. As you may give to a man in the temperate or frigid zones the seeds of some tropical plant, that

may, perhaps, grow and put forth some pale leaves and ineffectual blossoms, which yet will scarcely be worthy to be called leafage and flowerage, as compared with the broad, smooth foliage and glowing brightness that the same seeds would evolve planted in their natural soil; so here into our hands, wanderers in inclement climes, God puts what I may call the exotic seeds—the knowledge of His love in Christ—and we tend them; and, blessed be His name, they do grow beneath our cloudy skies, and amidst our long winters. But when we come to that higher house where these be planted, they shall flourish in a luxuriance and beauty undreamed of before.

68. Did you ever try to measure one day's actions by the standard of the New Testament? Cultivate the habit—the habit of bringing all that you do side by side with this light; as a scholar in some school of art will take his feeble copy, and hold it by the side of the masterpiece, and compare line for line, and tint for tint.

69. You and I have no present adequate means of knowing from what we have been delivered. We stand with averted eyes, as upon the edge of some great volcano, and see the swirling sulphur smoke and the fierce flames flashing out from the yellow sides of the fiery pit below; but we see but

little of what we have escaped from, nor know the dolefulness of the regions of alienation and rebellion and persistent rejection of God.

70. The higher you rise upon the cliffs, the further down into the abyss you can look; and, when we know what hell is, by the antithesis of heaven, we shall have a new vision, by what we win, of what we escaped when He took away the sting of death, and closed the gates of that dismal land.

71. There are more things round about you that will tempt you downwards than will draw you upwards, and your only security is constant watchfulness. As George Herbert says:—

“Who keeps no guard upon himself is slack,
And rots to nothing at the next great thaw.”

72. Suppose a man were to say about a steamship, “the structure of this vessel shows that it is meant that we should get up a roaring fire in the furnaces, and set the engines going at full speed, and let her go as she will.” Would he not have left out of account that there was steering apparatus which was as plainly meant to guide as are the engines to draw? What are the rudder and the wheel for? Do they not imply a pilot? And is

not the make of our souls as plainly suggestive of subordination and control ?

“ Unless above himself he can erect himself,
How mean a thing is man.”

73. In earthly joy there is ever something lacking, ever some unilluminated window in the palace, black amid the blaze.

74. Death, death itself, will be but the last burst of the expiring storm, the last blast of the worn-out tempest, and then, the quiet of the green, inland valleys of our Father's land, where no tempest comes any more, nor the loud winds are ever heard, nor the salt sea is ever seen ; but perpetual calm and blessedness ; all mystery gone, and all rebellion hushed and silenced, and all unrest at an end for ever. “ No more sea.”

75. I remember once seeing a bit of an old Roman road ; the lava blocks were there, but for want of care, here a young sapling had grown up between two of them and had driven them apart ; there they were split by the frost ; here was a great ugly gap full of mud ; and the whole thing ended in a jungle. How shall a man keep the road in repair ? “ By taking heed thereto.” Things that are left to go anyhow in this world have a strange knack of going *one* “ *how*.” You do not need any-

thing else than negligence to ensure that things will come to grief.

76. There may be a fountain of blessedness in your hearts, the springs and sources of which lie too deep down to be affected, either by the summer drought or the winter's frost.

77. Life is a voyage over a turbulent sea; changing circumstances come rolling after each other, like the undistinguishable billows of the great ocean. Tempests and storms rise. There is wearisome sailing, no peace, but "ever climbing up the climbing wave." *That* is life.

78. There is an end to all "the weary oar, the weary, wandering fields of barren foam." On the shore stands the Christ; and there is rest *there*.

79. That restless, profitless working of the great, homeless, hungry, moaning ocean—what a picture it is of the heart of a man that has no Christ, that has no God, that has no peace by pardon.

80. A little barque pitching in the night, and one figure rises quickly up in the stern, and puts out a rebuking hand, and speaks one mighty word, "Peace! be still." And the word was heard amid all the hurly-burly of the tempest, and the waves crouched at his feet like dogs to their master.

81. How much of the knowledges of earth will have ceased to be applicable, when the first light-beam of heaven falls upon them!

82. The sea stands as the emblem of untamed power. It is lashed into yeasty foam, and drives before it great ships and huge stones like bulrushes, and seems to have a savage pleasure in eating into the slow-corroding land, and covering the beach with its devastation.

83. The great Armada comes in its pride across the waters—and the motto that our England struck upon its medal, when that proud fleet was baffled, serves for the epitaph over all antagonism to God's Kingdom. "The Lord blew upon them, and they were scattered."

84. The ark of God "moves on the face of the waters," and though wild tempests howl to beat it from its course, yet beneath all the surface confusion and commotion, there is, as in the great mid-ocean, a silent current that runs steady and strong, and it carries the keel that goes deep enough down to rest in it, safely to its port.

85. In one of the mosques of Damascus, which has been a Christian church, and before that was a heathen temple, the portal bears, deep cut in Greek characters, the inscription, "Thy kingdom, O Christ,

is an everlasting kingdom, and 'Thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.' The confident words seem contradicted by the twelve centuries of Mohammedanism on which they have looked down. But, though their silent prophecy is unheeded and unheard by the worshippers below, it shall be proved true one day, and the crescent shall wane before the steady light of the Sun of Righteousness.

86. All through the apocalypse we hear the dash of the waves.

87. Think how the fact of dying will solve many a riddle ! how much more we shall know by shifting our position ! "There must be wisdom with great Death," and he "keeps the keys of all the creeds."

88. Who can tell what unknown resources and what possibilities of new powers there lie, all dormant and unsuspected, in the beggar on the dung-hill, and in the idiot in the asylum ?

89. We look out upon the broad ocean, and far away it seems to blend with air and sky. Mists come up over its surface. Suddenly there rises on the verge of the horizon a white sail that was not there a moment ago, and we wonder, as we look out from our hills, what may be beyond these mysterious waters. And to ancient peoples there were mysteries which we do not feel. Whither should they come, if

they were to venture on its untried tides? And then, what lies in its sunless caves that no eye has seen? It swallows up life, and beauty, and treasure of every sort, and engulfs them all in its obstinate silence. They go down in the mighty waters, and vanish as they descend; what would it be if these were drained off? what revelations—wild sea-valleys and mountain gorges; the dead that are in it, the power that lies there, all powerless now, the wealth that has been lost in it? What should we see if depth and distance were annihilated, and we beheld what there is out yonder, and what there is down there?

90. There is much that lies beyond the horizon which our eyes cannot reach. There is much that lies covered by the deeps, which our eyes *could* reach if the deeps were away.

91. Men will yield their whole souls to the warmth and light that stream from the cross, as the sunflower turns itself to the sun.

92. For the present, there has to be much destructive as well as constructive work done. Many a wretched hovel, the abode of sorrow and want, many a den of infamy, many a palace of pride, many a temple of idols, will have to be pulled down yet, and men's eyes will be blinded by the dust, and their hearts will ache as they look at the

ruins. Be it so. The finished structure will obliterate the remembrance of poor buildings that cumbered its site. This Emperor of ours may indeed say, that He found the city of brick and made it marble.

93. Travellers sometimes find in lonely quarries, long abandoned or once worked by a vanished race, great blocks squared and dressed, that seem to have been meant for palace or shrine. But there they lie, neglected and forgotten, and the building for which they were hewn has been reared without them. Beware, lest God's grand temple should be built without you, and you be left to desolation and decay.

94. The ideal perfection of faith would be that it should be unbroken, undashed by any speck of doubt. But the reality is far different. It is no full-orbed completeness, but, at the best, a growing segment of reflected light, with many a rough place in its jagged outline, prophetic of increase; with many a deep pit of blackness on its silver surface; with many a storm-cloud sweeping across its face; conscious of eclipse, and subject to change.

95. Wavering confidence, crossed and broken, like the solar spectrum, by many a dark line of doubt, will make our conscious possession of Christ's gift fitful.

96. There is Christ, as most of us, I suppose, believe, Lord of all creatures, administering the affairs of the universe ; the steps of His throne and the precincts of His court are thronged with dependents whose eyes wait upon Him, who are fed from His stores ; and yet my poor voice may steal through that chorus-shout of petition and praise, and His ear will detect its lowest note, and will separate the thin stream of my prayer from the great sea of supplication which rolls to His seat, and will answer *me*.

97 These demons of worldliness, of selfishness, of carelessness, of pride, of sensuality, that go careering through your soul are like the goblin horseman in the old legend ; wherever that hoof-fall strikes, the ground is blasted, and no grass will grow upon it any more for ever.

98. God drives a deep share through many a wayside heart, and the coulter of affliction breaks up many a spirit that it may afterwards yield "the peaceable fruit of righteousness."

99. The power and vitality of faith is not measured by the comprehensiveness and clearness of belief. The richest soil may bear shrunk and barren ears ; and on the arid sand, with the thinnest layer of earth, gorgeous cacti may bloom out, and

fleshy aloes lift their sworded arms, with stores of moisture to help them through the heat.

100. Many a poor soul that clasps the base of the crucifix clings to the cross ; many a devout heart, kneeling before the altar, sees, through the incense smoke the face of the Christ.





CHAPTER V.



HRIST'S mercy, like water in a vase, takes the shape of the vessel that holds it.

2. Suppose a little child, just beginning to open its eyes and unfold its faculties upon this wonderful world of ours. There you get the extreme of capacity for receiving impressions from without, the extreme of susceptibility to the influences that come upon it. Tell the little thing some trifle that passes out of *your* mind ; you forget all about it ; but it comes out again in the child weeks and weeks afterwards, showing how deep a mark it has made.

3. It is the law of the human nature that, when it is beginning to grow, it shall be soft as wax to receive all kinds of impressions, and then that it shall gradually stiffen and become hard as adamant to retain them. The rock was once all fluid, and plastic, and gradually it cools down into hardness.

If a finger-dint had been put upon it in the early time, it would have left a mark that all the forces of the world could not make nor can obliterate now. In our great museums you see stone slabs with the marks of rain that fell hundreds of years before Adam lived ; and the footprint of some wild bird that passed across the beach in those old, old times. The passing shower and the light foot left their prints on the soft sediment ; then ages went on, and it has hardened into stone ; and there they remain, and will remain for evermore.

4. Thank God for that "fine linen, clean and white, the righteousness" with which Christ covers our wounded nakedness. It becomes ours, though no thread of it was wrought in our looms.

5. If *we* are to do God's work in the world, we must be good, righteous, and true men. That robe, like the silken vest in which the knight, in the old legend, went forth to fight, is our true mail. It will turn blows and deaden cuts, and stay thrusts that will dint and shear through and pierce every other defence.

6. Beautiful to think of, how Christ laid hold of the vulgar things round about Him as the occasions for the utterance and moulds for the form of His precious words, and hung the teachings of His

wisdom on every thorn-bush and on every waving wheat-ear.

7. It is an awful thought that we may scatter abroad seeds which may take root in some hearts and may spring up a dark, waving, poisonous, hemlock growth. It is a blessed thought that we can sow seed which shall bear fruits of righteousness an hundredfold.

8. If you cannot see results here in the hot working day, the cool evening hours are drawing near, when you may rest from your labours, and then they will follow you.

9. We all think far too much of external activity, and too little of that spirit who must guide and fructify it ; too much of the institutions, and too little of the indwelling God. The great organ must be filled with the breath from the four winds of heaven, ere solemn praise can be thundered from its pipes. You may perfect your machinery ; but all its nicely-fitting parts stand motionless—a dead weight ; and not a spindle whirrs till the strong impulse, born of fire, rushes in.

10. “ His going forth is prepared as the morning ” that breaks, day by day, over a dark world, flushing the heavens with tender light, wakening shrill music on every bough, and opening the folded petals of all the flowers.

11. Alas ! that our careless indifference should so often leave our fleeces dry, while God's dew falls in silence from His starry heaven.

12. Judge nothing before the time. We cannot criticise the great Artist when we stand before His unfinished masterpiece, and see dim outlines here, a patch of crude colour there. But "wait patiently for Him."

13. We all receive unfinished tasks from those who go before ; we all transmit unfinished tasks to them who come after. Our vocation is to advance a little the dominion of God's truth, and to be one of the long line who pass on the torch from hand to hand.

14. What does it matter whether we have been set to dig out the foundation, working amongst mud and wet, or have laid the lowermost courses, which are all covered up and forgotten, or happen to have been among those who bring forth the headstones with shoutings ? We are all builders all the same. The main thing is we have some work there.

15. We work for eternity. We may well wait for the scaffolding to be taken away. Then we shall find that preparatory work is all represented in the final

issue ; even as the first film of alluvium, deposited in its delta by some mighty stream, is the real foundation for the last which, long ages after, rise above the surface and bear waving corn and the homes of men.

16. If you have God for your "enduring substance," you can face all varieties of condition, and be calm, saying—

"Give what Thou canst, without Thee I am poor,
And with Thee rich, take what Thou wilt away."

The amulet that charms away disquiet lies here.

17. Twice, or thrice, perhaps, in a lifetime, a man's road leads him up to a high dividing point, a watershed as it were, whence the rain runs from one side of the ridge to the Pacific, and from the other to the Atlantic. His whole future may depend on his bearing the least bit to the right hand or to the left, and all the slopes below, on either side, are wreathed in mist.

18. If we have not learned the habit of committing the daily-recurring monotonous steps to God, we shall find it very, very hard to seek His help when we come to a fork in the road.

19. Shall we try to be content with an animal limitation to the present, and heighten the bright colour of the little to-day by the black back-ground

that surrounds it, saying, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

20. Our will is to be master of our passions, and desires, and whims, and habits, but to be servant of God. It should silence all their cries, and itself be silent, that God may speak. Like the lawgiver captain in the wilderness, it should stand still at the head of the ordered rank, ready for the march, but motionless, till the Pillar lifts from above the sanctuary.

21. Let the affections feed on God, the will wait mute before Him, till His command inclines it to decision, and quickens it into action; let the desires fix upon His all-sufficiency; and then the wilderness will be no more trackless, but the ruddy blaze of the guiding pillar will brighten on the sand a path which men's hands have never made, nor human feet trodden into a road.

22. The future is dim, after all our straining to see into its depths. The future is threatening, after all our efforts to prepare for its coming storms. A rolling vapour veils it all; here and there a mountain peak seems to stand out; but in a moment, another swirl of the fog hides it from us.

23. Think how surely rest comes with delighting in God. For that soul must needs be calm which

is freed from the distraction of various desires by the one master attraction. Such a soul is still as the great river above the falls, when all the side currents and dimpling eddies and backwaters are effaced by the attraction that draws every drop in the one direction ; or like the same stream as it nears its end, and, forgetting how it brawled among rocks and flowers in the mountain glens, flows "with a calm and equable motion" to its rest in the central sea.

24. The presence of the King awes the crowd into silence. When the full moon is in the nightly sky it makes the heavens bare of flying cloud-rack, and all the twinkling stars are lost in the peaceful, solitary splendour. So let delight in God rise in our souls, and lesser lights pale before it—do not cease to be, but add their feebleness, unnoticed, to its radiance.

25. Character is made, as coral reefs are built up by a multitude of tiny creatures, whose united labours are strong enough to breast the ocean.

26. If we were not eager to stand on the giddy top of fortune's rolling wheel, we should not heed its idle whirl ; but we let our foolish hearts set our feet there, and thenceforward every lurch of the glittering instability threatens to lame or kill us.

27. Do not venture the rich freightage of your happiness in crazy vessels. If you do, be sure that, somewhere or other, before your life is ended, the poor, frail craft will strike on some black rock rising sheer from the depths, and will grind itself to chips there.

28. If your life twines round any prop but God your strength, be sure that, some time or other, the stay to which its tendrils cling will be plucked up, and the poor vine will be lacerated, its clusters crushed, and its sap bleeding out of it.

29. The sunshine flows into the opened eye, the breath of life into the expanding lung—so surely, so immediately, the fulness of God fills the waiting, wishing soul.

30. "I have been young, and now am old," says David. The dim eyes have seen and survived so much, that it seems scarcely worth while to be agitated by what ceases so soon. He has known so many bad men blasted in all their leafy verdure, and so many languishing good men revived, that—

"Old experience doth attain
To something of prophetic strain."

Life, with its changes, has not soured but quieted him. It does not seem to him an endless maze, nor has he learned to despise it. He has learned to see God in it all, and that has cleared its con-

fusion, as the movements of the planets, irregular and apparently opposite, when viewed from the earth, are turned into an ordered whole, when the sun is taken for the centre.

31. It is not our changing circumstances, but our unregulated desires, that rob us of peace. We are feverish, not because of the external temperature, but because of the state of our own blood.

32. We tie ourselves to these outward possessions, as Alpine travellers to their guides, and so, when they slip on the icy slopes, their fall is our death.

33. Moralities and the externals of religion will wash away the foulness which lies on the surface, but stains that have sunk deep into the very substance of the soul, and have dyed every thread in warp and woof to its centre, are not to be got rid of so. The awful words which our great dramatist puts into the mouth of the queenly murderess are heavy with the weight of the most solemn truth. After all vain attempts to cleanse away the stains, we, like her, have to say, "There's the smell of the blood still—will these hands ne'er be clean?"

34. Do not resist that merciful, searching fire, which is ready to penetrate our very bones and

marrow, and burn up the seeds of death which lurk in the inmost intents of the hearts! Let Him plunge you into that gracious baptism, as we put some poor piece of foul clay into the fire, and like it, as you glow you will whiten, and all the spots shall melt away before the conquering tongues of the cleansing flame.

35. How profound a truth lies in the words—
“What maketh Heaven, that maketh Hell.”

36. Where are the cloven tongues of fire, where the flame which Christ died to light up? Has it burned down to grey ashes, or, like some house-fire, lit and left untended, has it gone out after a little ineffectual crackling among the lighter pieces of wood and paper, without ever reaching the solid mass of obstinate coal.

37. Does Christ's love which fills our hearts coruscate and flame in our lives, making us lights in the darkness, as some fire-brand caught up from the hearth will serve for a torch, and blaze out into the night?

38. Did you ever see a blast-furnace? How long would it take a man, think you, with hammer and chisel, or by chemical means, to get the bits of ore out from the stony matrix? But fling them into the great cylinder, and pile the fire, and let the

strong draught roar through the burning mass, and by evening you can run off a glowing stream of pure and fluid metal from which all the dross and rubbish is parted, which has been charmed out of all its sullen hardness, and will take the shape of any mould into which you like to run it. The fire has conquered, has melted, has purified. So love "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us, will purify us from all our sins."

39. There is a fire that consumes the barren tree, and the light chaff that is whirled from the threshing-floor by the wind of God's fan ; but there is also a fire that, like the genial heat in some green-house, makes even the barren tree glow with blossom, and bends its branches with precious fruit.

40. To Israel the pledge and sacramental seal of God's guardianship and guidance was the pillar which, in the fervid light of the noon-day sun, seemed to be but a column of wavering smoke, but which, when the darkness fell, glowed at the heat and blazed across the sleeping camp, a fiery guard.

41. We are afraid to be fervent ; our true danger is icy torpor. We sit frost-bitten and almost dead among the snows, and all the while the gracious sunshine is pouring down, that is able to melt the white death that covers us, and to free us from the bonds that hold us prisoned in their benumbing clasp.

42. Our love is secondary—God's is primary ; ours is reflection, His the original beam ; ours is echo, His the mother-tone.

43. Heaven must bend to earth before earth can rise to heaven. The skies must open and drop down love, ere love can spring in the fruitful fields. And it is only when we look with true trust to that great unveiling of the heart of God which is in Jesus Christ, that our hearts are melted, and all their snows are dissolved into sweet waters, which, freed from their icy chains, can flow with music in their ripple, and fruitfulness along their course, through our otherwise silent and barren lives.

44. Men's indolence, and men's sense-ridden natures, will take symbols for realities, notes for wealth. The eye will be tempted to stay on the rich colours of the glowing glass, instead of passing through these to heaven's light beyond.

45. Love to God is no idle emotion or lazy rapture, no vague sentiment, but the root of all practical goodness, of all strenuous efforts, of all virtue, and of all praise. That strong tide is meant to drive the busy wheels of life and to bear precious freightage on its bosom ; not to flow away in profitless foam.

46. Love is the fruitful mother of bright children, as our great moralist-poet learned when he painted her in the "House of Holiness" :—

"A multitude of babes about her hung,
Playing their sport that joyed her to behold."

47. Our souls, by reason of sin, are "like sweet bells jangled, harsh and out of tune." Love's master hand laid upon them restores to them their part in "the fair music that all creatures make to their great Lord," and brings us into such accord with God that

"We on earth, with undiscording voice,
May rightly answer"

even the awful harmonies of His lips.

48. Ceremonies stand long after the thought which they express has fled, as a dead king may sit on his throne stiff and stark in his golden mantle, and no one come near enough to see that the light is gone out of his eyes, and the will departed from the hand that still clutches the sceptre.

49. As two stringed-instruments may be so tuned to one key-note that, if you strike the one, a faint ethereal echo is heard from the other, which blends undistinguishably with its parent sound ; so, drawing near to God, and brought into unison with His mind and will, our responsible spirits vibrate in accord

with His, and give forth tones, low and thin indeed, but still repeating the mighty music of heaven.

50. The imitation of the object of worship has always been felt to be the highest form of worship. Many an ancient teacher, besides the Stoic philosopher, has said, "He who copies the gods worships them adequately."

51. The perfect man in the heavens will include the graces of childhood, the energies of youth, the steadfastness of manhood, the calmness of old age; as on some tropical trees, blooming in more fertile soil, and quickened by a nearer sun than ours, you may see at once bud, blossom, and fruit—the expectancy of spring, and the maturing promise of summer, and the fulfilled fruit of autumn—hanging together on the unexhausted bough.

52. The deepest emotions in another world will be capable of expression—nor, as now, like some rushing tide, choke the floodgates through whose narrow aperture they try to press, and be all tossed into foam in the attempt.

53. With unworn and fresh heart we may bring forth fruit in old age, and have the crocus in the autumnal fields as well as in the spring-time of our lives.

54. For those who die in His faith and fear, "better is the end than the beginning, and the day of one's death than the day of one's birth." Christ keeps the good wine to the close of the feast.

55. Youth is the time for hope. The world lies all before us, fair and untried. The past is too brief to occupy us long, and its furthest point too near to be clothed in the airy purple which draws the eye and stirs the heart. We are conscious of increasing powers which crave for occupation. It seems impossible but that success and joy shall be ours. So we live for a little while in a golden haze; we look down from our peak upon the virgin forests of a new world that roll away to the shining waters in the west, and then we plunge into their mazes to hew out a path for ourselves, to slay the wild beasts, and to find and conquer rich lands. But soon we discover what hard work the march is, and what monsters lurk in the leafy coverts, and diseases hover among the marshes, and how short a distance ahead we can see, and how far off it is to the treasure-cities we dreamed of; and if at last we gain some cleared spot whence we can look forward, our weary eyes are searching at most for a place of rest, and all our hopes have dwindled to hopes of safety and repose.

56. Early delights cannot long survive. Custom stales them all, and wraps everything in its robe of ashen grey.

57. Time devours his own children. The morning hours come to us with full hands, the evening hours come with empty hands and take ; so that, at the last, "naked shall he return to go as he came."

58. *Here* we float on a land-locked lake, and on every side soon reach the bounding land ; but *there* we are on a shoreless ocean, and never hear any voice that says, "Hitherto shalt thou come and no farther."

59. The eye by gazing into the day becomes more recipient of more light ; the spirit cleaves closer to a Christ, more fully apprehended and more deeply loved ; the whole being, like a plant reaching up to the sunlight, grows by its yearning towards the light, and by the light towards which it strains—lifts a stronger stem, and spreads a broader leaf, and opens into immortal flowers, tinted by the sunlight with its own colours.

60. Each stage of our earthly course has its own peculiar characteristics, as each zone of the world has its own vegetation and animal life.

61. The same progress which brings April's perfumes burns them in the censer of the hot summer, and buries summer beneath the falling leaves, and covers the grave with winter's snow.

"Everything that grows
Holds in perfection but a little moment."

62. The life of man, being under the law of growth, is, in all its parts, subject to the consequent necessity of decline, and very swiftly does the direction change from ascending to descending. At first, and for a little while, the motion of the dancing stream, which broadens as it runs, and bears us past fields each brighter and more enamelled with flowers than the one before it, is joyous; but the slow current becomes awful as we are swept along, when we would fain moor and land—and to some of us it comes to be tragic and dreadful at last, as we sit helpless, and see the shore rush past and hear the roar of the falls in our ears, like some poor wretch caught in the glassy smoothness above Niagara, who has flung down the oars, and, clutching the gunwhale with idle hands, sits effortless and breathless till the plunge comes.

63. One of our modern mystics has said, hiding imaginative spiritualism under a crust of hard, dry matter-of-fact, "In heaven the oldest angels are the youngest."

64. For body and for spirit the life of earth is a definite whole, with distinct stages, which succeed each other in a well-marked order. There is youth, and maturity, and decay—the slow climbing to the narrow summit, a brief moment there in the streaming sunshine, and then a sure and gradual descent into the shadows beneath.

65. The same equable and constant motion urges the orb of our lives from morning to noon, and from noon to evening. The glory of the dawning day, with its golden clouds and its dewy freshness, its new-awakened hopes and its unworn vigour, climbs by silent, inevitable stages to the hot noon. But its ardours flame but for a moment, but for a moment does the sun poise itself on the meridian line, and the short shadow point to the pole. The inexorable revolution goes on, and in due time come the mists and dying purples of evening, and the blackness of night.

66. Once when Jesus was on earth, as some hidden light breaks through all veils, the pent-up glory of the great "God with us" seemed to stream through His flesh, and tinge with splendour even the skirts of His garment.

67. Rolling clouds hide the full view, but through them gleams the lustrous walls of the city which hath the foundations.

68. The hopes for the future lie around us as flowers in some fair garden where we walk in the night, their petals closed and their leaves asleep, but here and there a whiter bloom gleams out, and sweet, faint odours from unseen sources steal through the dewy darkness.

69. When bordering on despair at the sight of so much going wrong, so much ignorance, and sorrow, and vice, so many darkened understandings, and broken hearts, such wide tracts of savagery and godlessness, I can look up to Jesus, and can see far, far away—the furthest thing on the horizon—like some nebula, faint, it is true, and low down, but flickering with true starry light—the wondrous vision of many souls brought into glory, even a world redeemed.

70. “We see not yet all things put under Him, but we see Jesus.” One of our celebrated astronomers is said to have taught himself the rudiments of his starry science when lying on the hill-side keeping his father’s sheep. Perhaps the grand Psalm to which these words refer had a similar origin, and may have come from the early days of the shepherd-king, when, like those others of a later day, he abode in the field of Bethlehem, keeping watch over his flock by night. The magnificence of the Eastern heavens, with their “larger constella-

tions burning," filled his soul with two opposite thoughts—man's smallness and man's greatness.

71. How seldom I am conscious of the visits of God ; how full I am of weaknesses and imperfections—the solemn voice within me tells me at intervals when I listen to its tones. On my brow there gleams no diadem ; from my life, alas ! there shines, at the best, but a fitful splendour of purity, all striped with solid masses of blackness.

72. The youngest brother of the king is nearer to him than the oldest servant who stands before his face. Our brother is Lord of all, and His dominion is ours.

73. The impression of human incompleteness is made by all the records of human lives which we possess. Go into a library, and take down volume after volume, the biographies and autobiographies of the foremost men, the saints and sages whom we all reverence. Are not the honest autobiographies what one of the noblest of them is called, "Confessions"? Are not the memories the stories of flawed excellence, stained purity, limited wisdom?

74. Think of naked savages, who look up to bears and lions as their masters, who are stunted by cold or enervated by heat, out of whose souls

have died all memories beyond yesterday's hunger, and all hopes greater than a full meal to-morrow—and say if these are God's men. So little are they like it that some of us are ready to say that they are not men at all.

75. As it has been said, with pardonable extravagance, "Aristotle was but the rubbish of an Adam," so in sober truth we may affirm that the noblest and fairest characters are, after all, but fragments of precious stones as compared with that one entire and perfect chrysolite, whose unflawed beauty and completeness drinks in and flashes forth the whole light of God.

76. "The grace of God," says Luther somewhere, "is like a flying summer shower." It has fallen upon more than one land, and passed on. Judæa had it, and lies barren and dry. These Asiatic coasts had it, and flung it away.

77. Remember that solemn, strange legend which tells us, that, on the night before Jerusalem fell, the guard of the Temple heard through the darkness a voice mighty and sad, saying, "Let us depart," and were aware as of the sound of many wings passing from out of the Holy Place; and on the morrow the iron heels of the Roman legionaries trod the marble pavement of the innermost shrine,

and heathen eyes gazed upon the empty place where the glory of the God of Israel should have dwelt, and a torch, flung by an unknown hand, burned with fire the holy and beautiful house where He had promised to put His name for ever. And let us learn the lesson, and hold fast by that Lord whose blood has purchased, and whose presence preserves through all the unworthiness and the lapses of men, that church against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

78. To separate ourselves from our brethren is to lose power. Half-dead brands heaped close will kindle one another, and flame will sparkle beneath the film of white ashes on their edges. Fling them apart, and they go out. Rake them together, and they glow. Let us try not to be little, feeble tapers, stuck in separate sockets, and each twinkling struggling rays over some inch or so of space ; but draw near to our brethren, and be workers together with them, that there may rise a glorious flame from our summed and collective brightness which shall be a guide and hospitable call to many a wandering and weary spirit.

79. Thank God for the chastising presence of Christ. Better the eye of fire than the averted face. Better the sharp sword than His holding His peace as He did with Caiaphas and Herod.

80. Ephesus and her sister communities—planted by Paul, taught by John, loved and upheld by the Lord, warned and scourged by Him—where are they now? Broken columns and roofless walls remain; and where Christ's name was praised, now the minaret rises by the side of the mosque, and daily echoes the Christless proclamation, "There is no God, but God, and Mahomet is His prophet."

81. Let us beware lest, by any sloth and sin, we choke the golden pipes through which there steals into our tiny lamps the soft flow of that Divine oil which alone can keep up the flame.

82. You know these lights which we use now in public places, where you have a ring pierced with a hundred tiny holes, from each of which bursts a separate flame; but when all are lit, they run into one brilliant circle, and lose their separateness in the rounded completeness of the blended blaze. That is like what Christ's church ought to be. We each by our own personal contact with Him, by our individual communion with our Saviour, become light in the Lord, and yet we joyfully blend with our brethren, and, fused into one, give forth our mingled light.

83. All are needed to send out the church's choral witness and to hymn the church's full-toned

praise. The lips of the multitude thunder out harmony, before which the melody of the richest and sweetest single voice is thin and poor.

84. Are you any more a Christian because of all that intellectual assent to the solemn verities of your orthodox belief? Is not your life like some secularised monastic chamber, with holy texts carved on the walls, and saintly images looking down from golden windows on revellers and hucksters who defile its floor?

85. Joseph, too, surrounded by an ancient civilisation, and dwelling among granite temples and solid pyramids, and firm-based sphinxes, the very emblems of eternity, confessed that here he had no continuing city, but sought one to come. Dying, he said, "Carry my bones up from hence."

86. If vulgar brawling and rude merry-makers fill the inn, there will be no room for the pilgrim thoughts which bear the Christ in their bosom, and have angels for their guard; and if these holy wayfarers enter, their serene presence will drive forth the noisy crowd, and turn the place into a temple.

87. A church is not to be merely a multitude of separate points of brilliancy, but the separate points are to coalesce into one great orb'd brightness.

88. Thank God for the many instances in which one glowing soul, all aflame with love of God, has sufficed to kindle a whole heap of dead matter, and send it leaping skyward in ruddy brightness. Alas ! for the many instances in which the wet, green wood has been too strong for the little spark, and has not only obstinately resisted, but has ignominiously quenched its ineffectual fire.

89. Thank God, that when His church lives on a high level of devotion, it has never wanted for single souls who have towered even above that height, and have been elevated by it, as the snowy Alps spring not from the flats of Holland, but from the high central plateau of Europe.

90. How *silent* and gentle, though so mighty, is the action of the light—morning by morning God's great mercy of sunrise steals upon a darkened world in still, slow self-impartation ; and the light which has a force that has carried it across gulfs of space that the imagination staggers in trying to conceive, yet falls so gently that it does not move the petals of the sleeping flowers, nor hurt the lids of an infant's eyes.

91. The one distributing spirit divides to each man severally as He will ; and whether He endows him with starlike gifts, which soar above and blaze

over half the world with lustre that lives through the centuries, or whether He set him in some cottage window to send out a tiny cone of light, that pierces a little way into the night for an hour or two, and then is quenched—it is all one.

92. Is it not true that the religious condition of a church, and that of its leaders, teachers, pastors, ever tend to be the same as that of the level of water in two connected vessels? There is such a constant interaction and reciprocal influence that uniformity results. Either a living teacher will, by God's grace, quicken a languid church, or a languid church will, with the devil's help, stifle the life of the teacher. Take two balls of iron, one red-hot and one cold, and put them down beside each other. How many degrees of difference between them, after half-an-hour, will your thermometer show?

93. Our lives should be like the costly box of fragrant ointment which that penitent, loving woman lavished on her Lord, the sweet, penetrating, subtle odour of which stole through all the air till the house was filled.

94. Nothing but Christian faith gives to the furthest future the solidity and definiteness which it must have if it is to be a breakwater for us against the fluctuating sea of present cares and thoughts.

95. If the unseen is ever to rule in men's lives, it must be through their thoughts. It must become intelligible, clear, real. It must be brought out of the flickering moonlight of fancy and surmises into the sunlight of certitude and knowledge.

96. He is rather a beast than a man who floats lazily on the warm, sunny wavelets, as they lift him in their roll, and does not raise his head high enough above them to see and steer for the solid shore where they break.

97. Stars shine ; so do lamps. Light comes from both, in different fashion indeed, and of a different quality, but still both are lights. So, essentially, all Christian men have the same work to do.

98. How absurd, how monotonous, how trivial it all is, all this fret and fume, all these dying joys and only less fleeting panics, all this mill-horse round of work which we pace, unless we are, mill-horse-like, driving a shaft that goes *through the wall*, and grinds something that falls into "bags that wax not old" on the other side.

99. It is the horizon that gives dignity to the foreground. A picture without sky has no glory. This present, unless we see gleaming beyond it the eternal calm of the heavens, above the tossing tree-tops with withering leaves, and the smoky

chimneys, is a poor thing for our eyes to gaze at, or our hearts to love, or our hands to toil on. But when we see that all paths lead to heaven, and that our eternity is affected by our acts in time, then it is blessed to gaze—it is possible to love the earthly shadows of the uncreated beauty, it is worth while to work.

100. God's chariot is self-moving. One after another who lays his hands upon the ropes and hauls for a little space, drops out of the ranks. But it will go on, and in His majesty He will ride prosperously.





CHAPTER VI.



THOUGH beaten back again and again by the surge of our passions and sins, like some poor shipwrecked sailor, sucked back with every retreating wave and tossed about in the angry surf, yet keep your face towards the beach, where there is safety, and you will struggle through it all, and, though it were but on some floating boards and broken pieces of the ship, will come safe to land.

2. The spiritual life was nourished in Joseph and in the rest of the "world's grey fathers" on what looks to us but like seven basketsful of fragments.

3. Across the gulf of centuries we clasp hands ; and in despite of all superficial differences of culture and civilisation, and all deeper differences in knowledge of God and His loving will, Pharoah's prime

minister, and the English workman, and the Hindoo ryot, may be alike in what is deepest—the faith which grasps God.

4. The tent life will always be the natural one for those who feel that their mother country is beyond the stars. We should be like the wandering Swiss, who hear in a strange land the rude old melody that used to echo among the Alpine pastures. The sweet, sad tones kindle home sickness that will not let them rest; no matter where they are, or what they are doing, no matter what honour they have carved out for themselves with their swords, they throw off the livery of the alien king which they have worn, and turning their backs upon pomp and courts, seek the free air of the mountains, and find home better than a place by a foreign throne.

5. When the mist lifts, and shows the snowy summits of the “mountains of God,” the nearer lower ranges, which we thought the highest, dwindle indeed, but gain in sublimity and meaning by the loftier peaks to which they lead up.

6. The true Christian faith teaches us that this is the workshop where God makes men, and the next the palace where he shows them. All here is apprenticeship and training. It is of no more value

than the attitudes into which gymnasts throw themselves, but as a discipline most precious.

7. A man who has not learned to say, "No"—who is not resolved that he *will* take God's way, in spite of every dog that can bay or bark at him, in spite of every silvery voice that woos him aside—will be a weak and a wretched man till he dies.

8. In your heart, like some black well-head in a dismal bog, is the source of all the swampy corruption that fills your life. You cannot staunch it, you cannot drain it, you cannot sweeten it. Ask Him, who is above your nature and without it, to change it by His own new life infused into your spirit. He will heal the bitter waters. He alone can.

9. The sweet singer of Israel had taught men songs of purer piety and subtler emotion than the ruder harps of older singers had ever flung from their wires.

10. They whose souls are fed with heavenly manna, and who have learned that it is their necessary food, will scent no dainties in the flesh-pots of Egypt, for all their rank garlic and leeks.

11. Many a man who thinks himself a Christian, is in more danger from the daily commission, for

example, of small pieces of sharp practice in his business, than ever was David at his worst. White ants pick a carcass clean sooner than a lion will.

12. Saul—a blasted pine tree, towering above the forest, but dead at the top, and barked and scathed all down the sides by the lightning scars of passion.

13. Let God's Holy Spirit be the foundation of thy life, and then thy tremulous and vagrant soul shall be braced and fixed. The building will become like the foundation, and will grow into "a tower of strength that stands foursquare to every wind." Rooted in God, thou shalt be unmoved by "the loud winds when they call"; or if still the tremulous leaves are huddled together before the blast, and the swaying branches creak and groan, the bole will stand firm, and the gnarled roots will not part from their anchorage, though the storm-giant drag at them with a hundred hands.

14. The artist that is satisfied with his transcript of his ideal will not grow any more. There is a touching story, I remember, told of a modern sculptor, who was found standing in front of his master-piece, sunk in sad reverie; and when they asked him why he was so sad, "Because," he answered "I am satisfied with it." "I have em-

bodied," he would say, "all that I can think or feel. There it is. And because there is no discord between what I dream and what I can do, I feel that the limit of my growth is reached."

15. No man knows how much of goodness, nobleness, and wisdom are possible for any man, or for himself. No bounds can be set to that progress of growth. There is no point on that happy voyage, beyond which icy cliffs and a frozen ocean forbid a passage ; but before us, to the verge of our horizon of to-day, stretch the open waters : and when that furthest point of vision lies as far astern as it now gleams ahead, the same boundless sapphire sea will draw our yearning desires, and bear onwards our advancing powers.

16. We need firmness to guard holiness, to be the hard shell in which the fruit matures.

17. When the sunbeams fall upon a mirror, it flashes in the light, just because they do not enter its cold surface. It is a mirror, because it does not drink them up, but flings them back. The contrary is the case with these sentient mirrors of our spirits. In them, the light must first sink in before it can ray out. They must first be filled with the glory, before the glory can stream forth. They are not so much like a reflecting surface as like a bar of iron,

which needs to be heated right down to its obstinate black core before its outer skin glow with the whiteness of a heat that is too hot to sparkle. The sunshine must fall on us, not as it does on some lonely hill-side, lighting up the grey stones with a passing gleam that changes nothing, and fades away, leaving the solitude to its sadness; but as it does on some cloud cradled near its setting, which it drenches and saturates with fire till its cold heart burns, and all its wreaths of vapour are brightness palpable, glorified by the light which lives amidst its mists. So must we have the glory sink into us before it can be reflected from us.

18. Just as we fit round a central light sparkling prisms, each of which catches the glow at its own angle, and flashes it back of its own colour, while the sovereign completeness of the perfect white radiance comes from the blending of all their separate rays; so they who stand round about the starry throne receive each the light in his own measure and manner, and give forth each a true and perfect, and altogether a complete, image of Him who enlightens them all, and is above them all.

19. Like the serene choirs of angels in the old pictures, each one with the same tongue of fire on the brow, with the same robe flowing in the same folds to the feet, with the same golden hair, yet

each a separate self, with his own gladness, and a different instrument for praise in his hand, and his own part in that "undisturbed song of pure concert," we shall all be changed into the same image, and yet each heart grow great with its own blessedness, and each spirit bright with its own proper lustre of individual and characteristic perfection.

20. We cannot erase the sad records from our past. The ink is indelible; and besides all that we have visibly written in these terrible autobiographies of ours, there is much that has sunk into the page, there is many a "secret fault," the record of which will need the fire of that last day to make it legible.

21. This is the blessedness of all true penitence, that the more profoundly it feels our own sore need and great sinfulness, in that very proportion does it recognise the yet greater mercy and all-sufficient grace of our loving God, and from the lowest depths beholds the stars in the sky, which they who dwell amid the surface-brightness of the noon-day cannot discern.

22. The wheels of God's great will may grind us small, without our coming to know or to hate our sin. About His chastisements, about the revelation of His wrath, that old saying is true to a

great extent: "If you bray a fool in a mortar, his folly will not depart from him."

23. Profound and suggestive is that other name for sin, that which is twisted or bent—"iniquity." It is the same metaphor which lies in our own word "wrong," that which is wrung or warped from the straight line of right. To that line, drawn by God's law, our lives should run parallel, bending neither to the right hand nor to the left. But, instead of the firm directness of such a line, our lives show wavering deformity, and are like the tremulous strokes in a child's copy-book. David had the pattern before him, and by its side his unsteady purpose, his passionate lust had traced this wretched scrawl. The path on which he should have trodden was a straight course to God, unbending like one of these conquering Roman roads, that will turn aside for neither mountain nor ravine, nor stream nor bog.

24. As you run your pen through the finished pages of your last year's diaries, as you seal them up and pack them away, and begin a new page in a new book on the first of January, so it is possible for every one of us to do with our lives.

25. A man never gets what he hoped for by doing wrong, or, if he seem to do so, he gets some-

thing more that spoils it all. He pursues after the fleeing form that seems so fair, and when he reaches her side, and lifts her veil, eager to embrace the tempter, a hideous skeleton grins and gibbers at him. The syren voices sing to you from the smiling island, and their white arms, and golden harps, and the flowery grass, draw you from the wet boat and the weary oar ; but when a man lands he sees the fair form end in a slimy fish, and she slays him and gnaws his bones. “ He knows not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell.”

26. As, sometimes, you will find in an old monkish library the fair vellum that once bore lascivious stories of ancient heathens and pagan deities turned into the manuscript in which a saint has penned his contemplations, an Augustine his Confessions, or a Jerome his Translations, so our souls may become palimpsests. The old, wicked, heathen characters that we have traced there may be blotted out, and covered over by the writing of that Divine Spirit who has said, “ I will put my laws into their minds and write them in their hearts.”

27. If you look closely enough into a man's eye, you will see in it little pictures of what he beholds at the moment : and if our hearts are beholding

Christ, Christ will be mirrored and manifested on our hearts.

28. Self-respect and reverence for the sanctities of our deepest emotions forbid our proclaiming these from the house-top. Let these be curtained, if you will, from all eyes but God's, but let no folds hang before the picture of your Saviour that is drawn on your heart.

29. Let Christ's pure face shine upon heart and spirit, and as the sun photographs itself on the sensitive plate exposed to its light, and you get a likeness of the sun by simply laying the thing in the sun, so He will "be formed in you."

30. Our past is a blurred manuscript, full of false things and bad things. We have to spread the writing before God, and ask Him to remove the stained characters from its surface, that once was fair and unsoiled.

31. Our finite minds have to lose the individual in order to grasp the class. Our eyes see the wood far off on the mountain-side, but not the single trees, nor each fluttering leaf.

32. It is possible to stumble at noontide, as in the dark. A man may starve, outside of barns filled with plenty, and his lips may be parched with

thirst, though he is within sight of a broad river flowing in the sunshine. So a soul may stiffen into the death of self and sin, even though the Voice that wakes the dead to a life of love be calling to it.

33. As one of the old mystics called prayer "the flight of the lonely man to the only God," so we may call the act of faith the meeting of the soul alone with Christ alone.

34. Are our characters like those transparent clocks, where you can see not only the figures and hands, but the wheels and works?

35. It was a deep, true thought which the old painters had, when they drew John as likest to his Lord. Love makes us like.

36. Iron near a magnet becomes magnetic. Spirits that dwell with Christ become Christ-like. The Roman Catholic legends put this truth in a coarse way, when they tell of saints who have gazed on some ghastly crucifix till they have received, in their tortured flesh, the copy of the wounds of Jesus, and have thus borne in their body the marks of the Lord. The story is hideous and gross, the idea beneath is ever true.

37. The man that travels with his face northwards has it grey and cold. Let him turn to the

warm south, where the midday sun dwells, and his face will glow with the brightness that he sees. Live in sight of your Lord, and catch His spirit.

38. There is but a fragment of the great image yet reproduced in your soul, a faint outline dimly traced, with many a feature wrongly drawn, with many a line still needed, before it can be called even approximately complete. See to it that you neither turn away your gaze nor relax your efforts till all that you have beheld in Christ is repeated in you.

39. One of the most obvious peculiarities of Paul's style is his habit of "going off at a word." Each thought is, as it were, barbed all round, and catches and draws into sight a multitude of others but slightly related to the main purpose in hand. And this characteristic gives, at first sight, an appearance of confusion to his writings. But it is not confusion, it is richness. The luxuriant underwood which this fertile soil bears, as some tropical forest, does not choke the great trees, though it drapes them.

40. In the Old Dispensation, the light that broke through clouds was but that of the rising morning. It touched the mountain tops of the loftiest spirits : a Moses, a David, an Elijah caught the early gleams ; while all the valleys slept in the pale shadow, and

the mist clung in white folds to the plains. But the noon has come, and from its steadfast throne in the very zenith, the sun which never sets pours down its rays into the deep recesses of the narrowest gorge, and every little daisy and hidden flower catches its brightness, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

41. A hundred processes may go to the manufacture of one article, though it were only a pin; and all the multitude of our engagements may, if we will, be stages in one great journey.

42. All our course, if we have Christ with us in the vessel, will be like sailing down some fair, widening stream amongst rocky mountains, and vine-clad slopes, with the blue sky above. Every now and then seeming to be land-locked, and yet, as each rocky headland is rounded, the shining river stretches itself into another reach, and laving the base of another verdant hill, slides broader and deeper to the great sea to which we come.

43. The earth-born vapours may hang about the low levels, and turn the gracious sun himself into a blood-red ball of lurid fire: but they reach only a little way up, and high above their region is the pure blue, and the blessed light pours down upon the upper surface of the white mist, and thins

away its opaqueness, and dries up its clinging damp, and at last parts it into filmy fragments that float out of sight, and the dwellers on the green earth see the light which was always there even when they could not behold it, and which, by shining on, has conquered all the obstructions that veiled its beams.

44. You take the course of life that is forced upon you. Is that what you have got a conscience for, that you should be like those creatures in the lowest region of organised life, whom the microscopist makes visible by feeding with some coloured material which absorbs and tinges their whole filmy organisation? And so *you* get the colour of what you live upon.

45. Surely there is nothing walks the earth more contemptible, as well as more certainly evil, than a man who lets himself be made by whatever force may happen to be strongest near him, and fastening up his helm, and unshipping his oars, is content to be blown about by every vagrant wind, and rolled in the trough of each curling wave.

46. We must be made fast to something that is fast, if we are not to be swept like thistle-down before the wind.

47. The breast that is girt with the golden girdle of priestly sovereignty is the same tender home on which John's happy head rested in placid contentment.

48. If rejected, the work of Christ does more harm to a man than anything else can, just because if accepted, it would have done him more good. The brighter the light, the darker its shadow. The pillar, which symbolised the presence of God, sent down influences on either side ; to the trembling crowd of Israelites on the one hand, to the pursuing ranks of the Egyptians on the other ; and though the pillar was one, opposite effects streamed from it, and "it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these." Everything depends on which side of the pillar you choose to see.

49. The ark of God, which brought dismay and death among false gods and their worshippers, brought blessing into the humble house of Obed-Edom, the man of Gath, with whom it rested for three months before it was set in its place in the city of David.

50. The child may struggle in the mother's arms, and beat the breast that shelters it with its little hand ; but it neither hurts nor angers that gentle bosom, and the firm but loving grasp holds it fast.

51. The "brook by the way" is but to refresh us as we go on to the fight. A few drops caught up in the palm as we run will help us, but if we fall on our knees to slake our thirst, we have to fling down our sword and unbrace our helmet, and we prove ourselves too self-indulgent for the army of God.

52. The billows are white on the long track astern, but he does not see them who stands at the bow, and marks the foam of the sparkling waves that leap up to meet the good ship as she comes onward. It is when you turn your *face* to the sun, that a golden path of light stretches across the sea, right before your feet. It is when we look forward and Christward, letting Him fill the future and the future fill our hearts, and it is only then that we can "forget the things that are behind."

53. What a noble thing any life becomes, that has driven through it the strength of a uniting single purpose, like a strong shaft of iron bolting together the two tottering walls of some old building.

54. Many of us simply keep on doing the narrow round of things that we fancy we can do well, or have always been in the way of doing, like barrel-organs, grinding our poor little sets of tunes, without

any notion of the great sea of music that stretches all round about us, and which is not pegged out upon our cylinders at all.

55. Forget your past circumstances, whether they be sorrows or joys. The one is not without remedy, the other not perfect. Both are past; why remember them? Why should you carry about parched corn when you dwell among fields white unto harvest? Why carry putrid water in the bottom of a rancid skin, when living in a land of fountains and brooks that run among the hills? Why clasp a handful of poor withered flowers, when the grass is sown with their bright eyes opening to the sunshine?

56. God gives us remembrance in order that we may make great and blessed use of it. Often in our hearts may shine an after-glow of coruscating light from a sun that has set, more lustrous, more calm, more mellow, than when its hot fervours were falling on our heads—a pensive, clear, and still Indian summer of memory after the sultry autumn has gone.

57. We may have as much of God as we want, as much as we can hold, far more than we deserve. No ebb withdraws the waters of that great ocean; and if sometimes there be sand and ooze where

once the flashing flood brought life and motion, it is because careless warders have shut the sea-gates.

58. If *we* are sitting drowsy by our camp-fires, the enemy is on the alert. You can hear the tramp of their legions and the rumble of their artillery through the night, as they march to their posts on the field. It is no time for God's sentinels to nod.

59. As the shower of ashes at Pompeii moulded themselves over the forms of the poor wretches that were smothered by them, and preserved till to-day the print of the very waves of their hair and the texture of their dress, "salt" was crusted round that living core, and Lot's wife perished, because she watched in trembling retrospect the flying moments which, rightly used, would have set her in safety.

60. Habits are like fences, very good to guard the soul from sudden incursions of trespassers, but very bad when the trunk has grown up and presses against their stubborn rings.

61. "I press toward the mark, reaching forth unto the things that are before." "Reaching forth unto." The idea is that of a man stretching himself towards something as a runner does, with his body straining forward, the hand and the eye drawn onward toward the goal. He does not think of the furlongs that he has passed, he heeds not the nature

of the ground over which he runs. The sharp stones in the path do not stay him, nor the flowerets in the grass catch his glance. The white faces of the crowd around the course are seen as in a flash as he rushes past them to the winning-post, and the parsley-garland that hangs there is all that he is conscious of.

62. Do you "press toward the mark," and the moment that you toe the line where the winning-post stands, at that moment on your brow will fall the amaranthine garland.

63. The hopes of men, who have not their hearts fixed upon God, try to grapple themselves on the cloudrack that rolls along the flanks of the mountains, and *our* hopes pierce within that veil and lay hold of the Rock of Ages, that towers above the flying vapours.

64. A drop of blood on your brain, or a crumb of bread in your windpipe, and, as far as you are concerned, the outward heavens and earth "pass away with a great" *silence*, as the impalpable shadows that sweep over some lone hill-side.

"The glories of our birth and state
Are shadows, not substantial things ;
There is no armour against fate ;
Death lays his icy hand on kings."

65. Here the distracting whirl of earthly things obscures God from even the devoutest souls, and His own mighty works which reveal do also conceal. In them is the hiding as well as the showing of His power. But *there* the veil which draped the perfect likeness, and gave but dim hints through its heavy swathings of the outline of immortal beauty that lay beneath, shall fall away. "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness."

66. We live in a busy time. Life goes swiftly in all regions. Men seem to be burning away faster than ever before, in an atmosphere of pure oxygen.

67. The watchman's office falls to be done by all who see the coming peril, and have a tongue to echo it forth. What should we think of a citizen in a beleagured city, who saw the enemy mounting the very ramparts, and gave no alarm because that was the sentry's business? In such extremity every man is a soldier, and women and children can at least keep watch, and raise shrill shouts of warning.

68. The watchman who stands on his watch-tower whole nights, and sees foemen creeping through the gloom, or fire bursting out among the straw-roofed cottages within the walls, shouts with all his might the short, sharp alarm, that wakes the

sleepers to whom slumber were death. Let us ponder the pattern.

69. The prayer that prevails is a reflected promise. Our office in prayer is but to receive on our hearts the bright rays of God's word, and to flash them back from the polished surface to the heaven from whence they came.

70. The ancient legend which told how, on many a well-fought field, the ranks of Rome discerned through the battle dust the gleaming weapons and white steeds of the Great Twin Brethren far in front of the solid legions, is true in loftier sense in our Holy war.

71. "I *will* that they whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." The instinct of the church has, from of old, laid hold of an event in His earthly life to shadow forth this great truth, and has bid us see a pledge and a symbol of it in that scene on the Lake of Galilee: the disciples toiling in the sudden storm, the poor little barque tossing on the waters tinged by the wan moon, the spray dashing over the wearied rowers. They seem alone, but up yonder, in some hidden cleft of the hills, their Master looks down on all the weltering storm, and lifts His voice in prayer. Then, when the need is sorest, and the hope least, He comes

across the waves, making their surges His pavement, and using all opposition as the means of His approach, and His presence brings calmness; and immediately they are at the land.

72. Take heed that the process of dissipating the vain shows of earth be begun betimes in your souls. It must either be done by faith, whose rod disenchantments them into their native nothingness, and then it is blessed; or it must be done by death, whose mace smites them to dust, and then it is pure, irrevocable loss and woe.

73. Let your hearts seek Christ, and your souls cleave to Him. Then death will take away nothing from you that you would care to keep, but will bring you your true joy. It will but trample to fragments the "dome of many-coloured glass" that "stains the white radiance of eternity."

74. At first the music of the prophetic song seems to move uncertainly amid sweet sounds, from which the true theme by degrees emerges, and thenceforward recurs, over and over again, with deeper, louder harmonies clustering about it, till it swells into the grandeur of the choral close.

75. The fairest life ever lived on earth was that of a poor man, and with all its beauty it moved

within the limits of narrow resources. The loveliest blossoms do not grow on plants that plunge their greedy roots into the fattest soil. A little light earth in the crack of a hard rock will do.

76. While all without is unreal, it is also fleeting as the shadows of the flying clouds ; and when God awakes, it disappears as they before the moonlight that clears the heavens.

77. All things that are, are on condition of perpetual flux and change. The cloud-rack has the likeness of bastions and towers, but they are mist, not granite, and the wind is every moment sweeping away their outlines, till the phantom fortress topples into red ruin while we gaze. The tiniest stream eats out its little valley and rounds the pebble in its widening bed ; rain washes down the soil, and frost cracks the cliffs above. So silently and yet mightily does the law of change work, that to a meditative eye the solid earth seems almost molten and fluid, and the everlasting mountains tremble to decay.

78. Do we not all know that, when the chains of slumber bind sense, and the disturbance of the outer world is hushed, there are faculties of our souls which work more strongly than in our waking hours? We are all poets, "makers" in our sleep.

Memory and imagination open their eyes when flesh closes it. We can live through years in the dreams of a night ; so swiftly can spirit move when even partially freed from "this muddy vesture of decay."

79. Here we are like men asleep in some chamber that looks towards the eastern sky. Morning after morning comes the sunrise, with the tender glory of its rosy light and blushing heavens, and the heavy eyes are closed to it all. Here and there some lighter sleeper, with thinner eyelids or face turned to the sun, is half conscious of a vague brightness, and feels the light, though he sees not the colours of the sky nor the forms of the filmy clouds. Such souls are our saints and prophets; but most of us sleep on unconscious.

80. The treasures which are kept in coffers are not real, but only those which are kept in the soul.

81. This life of ours hides more than it reveals. The day shows the sky as solitary, but for wandering clouds that cover its blue emptiness. But the night peoples its waste places with stars, and fills all its abysses with blazing glories. "If light so much conceals, wherefore not life?"

82. God does not set us here as on a knife edge, with abysses on either side ready to swallow us if

we stumble, while He stands apart watching for our halting, and unhelpful to our tottering feebleness.

83. For sixty times sixty slow, throbbing seconds, the silent hand creeps unnoticed round the dial, and then, with whirr and clang, the bell rings out, and another hour of the world's secular day is gone. The billows of the thunder-cloud slowly gather into vague form, and slowly deepen in lurid tints, and slowly roll across the fainting blue ; they touch—and then the fierce flash, like the swift hand on the palace-wall of Babylon, writes its message of destruction over all the heaven at once.

“The mill of God grinds slowly,
But it grinds exceeding small.”

84. In the tabernacle of Israel stood two great emblems of the functions of God's people which embodied two sides of the Christian life. Day by day there ascended from the altar of incense the sweet odour, which symbolised the fragrance of prayer as it wreathes itself upwards to the heavens. Night by night, as darkness fell on the desert and the camp, there shone through the gloom the hospitable light of the great golden candlestick, with its seven lamps, whose steady rays outburned the stars that paled with the morning. Side by side they proclaimed to Israel its destiny to be the light of the world, to be a kingdom of priests.

85. "He could there do no mighty works because of their unbelief." The great reservoir is always full—full to the brim ; however much may be drawn from it, the water sinks not a hair's breadth ; but the bore of the pipe and the power of the pumping-engine determine the rate at which the steam flows from it. The obstruction of indifference dammed back the water of life. The city perishes for thirst if the long line of aqueduct that strides across the plain towards the home of the mountain torrents be ruinous, broken down, choked with rubbish.

86. This Master, Christ, works in front of His men. The farmer that goes first among all the sowers, and heads the line of reapers in the yellowing harvest-field, may well have diligent servants. Our Master went forth, weeping, bearing precious seed, and has left it in our hands to sow in all furrows. Our Master is the Lord of the harvest, and has borne the heat of the day before His servants.

87. Let it be our life's work to show forth Christ's praise ; let the very atmosphere in which we move and have our being be prayer. Let two great currents set ever through our days, which two, like the great movements in the ocean of the air, are but the upper and under halves of the one movement—that beneath with constant energy of desires rush-

ing in from the cold poles to be warmed and expanded at the tropics, where the all-moving sun pours his direct rays ; that above charged with rich gifts from the Lord of light, glowing with heat drawn from Him, and made diffusive by His touch, spreading itself out beneficent and life-bringing into all colder lands, swathing the world in soft, warm folds, and turning the polar ice into sweet waters.

88. Most of you will understand what I mean when I say that if a young man comes into this city, and takes his place at desk or counter, or on the benches of Owen's College, and there forgets resistance, sturdy non-compliance, and heroic daring to be singular, when evil tempts him, he is ruined body and soul. Like some pleasure-boat that runs out of harbour with a careless crew, flags flying, and laughter sounding, and before she has well cleared the port is smashed to pieces on the black shelf of rocks, half hid by the sunny waters as they break over it in dancing foam

89. Do not let yourselves be talked, or frightened, or swayed by the mere mass of evil example out of your true path, as the remoter planets may be perturbed in their orbits by that huge body which moves where the light is feeblest on the outer verge of the system.

90. What a shame it is that a man should have no more volition in what he does and in what he refrains from than one of those gelatinous creatures that float about in the ocean, which have to move wherever the current takes them, though it be to cast them upon the rocky shore with an ebbing tide!

91. In the field of opinion, the lazy acquiescence with which men hand their ready-made cut-and-dried theories and thoughts from one to another, and never "look the gift-horse in the mouth," but swallow the thing whole, for no better reason than that contained in the cowardly old proverb that "what everybody says must be true," is the fruitful source of error, hypocrisy, weakness, and misery.

92. You must learn to look with your own eyes, and not through the spectacles of any human guides, authorities, or teachers upon the mystic, awful verities of this strange life, and upon the light that falls on them from the far-off empyrean above.

93. If you go careering among the flowers and fruits that grow around you in the life that is opening for you, like town children turned loose for a day in the woods, picking whatever is bright, and tasting whatever looks as if it would be sweet, you will poison yourselves with nightshade and hemlock.

94. Christ puts not bread into our hands but seed-corn, and although we carry away the full sack whenever we go to our Brother and ask Him to feed our hungriness, it is germinal principles that He gives us, rather than loaves, and we have got to cultivate them and watch them, and patiently too, in the belief that He will bless the springing thereof, and after many days we shall find seed for new sowing, as well as bread for the eater.

95. Gather off your beech-trees in the budding spring days a little brown shell, in which lies tender green foliage, and if you will carefully strip it, you will find packed in a compass, that might almost go through the eye of a needle, the whole of that which afterwards in the sunshine is to spread and grow to the yellow-green foliage which delights and freshens the eye. So in Christ—to be unfolded through slow generations, in accordance with human experience and wants—is all that men can know or need to know concerning God and themselves, and the relations of both—their duties, their hopes, their fears, and their love.

96. They tell us that no two atoms ever really touch; some film of air is ever between them. And after all sweetness of closest society there is a gap between the most loving souls. But we can be joined to Christ in real, perfect union.

97. Christ is in us as the sunlight in the else darkened chamber ; we are in Him as the cold, green log, cast into the flaming furnace, glows through and through with ruddy and transforming heat.

98. How many of us are like great, overgrown boys, whose education has been neglected, sitting upon the lowest form with their spelling-books in their hands when they are men, and having learnt next door to nothing in all the years we have called ourselves Christians ?

99. Is it not true that we are angry rather than thankful when some new thought comes to us out of Christ's word, disturbing all the rest, just as when you get a new piece of furniture into your house, you have to arrange and re-arrange all the other pieces in order to get it straight.

100. God speaks, and it is done. At the sound of that thunder-voice, hushed stillness and a pause of dread falls upon all the wide earth, deeper and more awe-struck than the silence of the woods with their huddling leaves, when the feeble peals roll through the sky. "The depths are congealed in the heart of the sea," as if you were to lay hold of Niagara in its wildest plunge, and were with a word to freeze all its descending waters and stiffen them into immovableness in fetters of eternal ice. So He utters His voice, and all meaner noises are hushed.



CHAPTER VII.



S two carbon points when the electric stream is poured upon them are gnawed to nothingness by the fierce heat, and you can see them wasting before your eyes, so the concentrated ardour of the breath of God falls upon the hostile evil, and lo! it is not.

2. We on whom the ends of the earth are come have the same helper, the same friend that "the world's grey patriarchs" had. They that go before do not prevent them that come after. The river is full still. The van of the pilgrim host did, indeed, long, long ago drink and were satisfied, but the bright waters are still as pellucid, still as near, still as refreshing, still as abundant as they ever were.

3. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God." Alone among the

great cities and historical centres of the world, Jerusalem stood upon no broad river, one little perennial stream, or rather rill of living waters was all which it had ; but Siloam was mightier and more blessed for the dwellers in the rocky fortress of the Jebusites than the Euphrates, Nile or Tiber for the historical cities which stood upon their banks.

4. "The glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams wherein shall go no galley with oars." The picture in that metaphor is of a stream lying round Jerusalem, like the moated rivers which girdle some of the cities in the plains of Italy, and are the defence of those who dwell enclosed in their flashing links.

5. The waters of the sea ! those barren, wandering fields of foam, going moaning round the world with unprofitable labour, how they have been the emblem of unbridled power, of tumult and strife, and anarchy and rebellion.

6. Bread nourishes, not when it is looked at, but when it is eaten.

7. The extremest power is silent. The mightiest force in all the universe is the force which has neither speech nor language. The parent of all physical force. As astronomers seem to be more

and more teaching us, so the great central sun which moveth all things, which operates all physical changes, whose beams are all but omnipotent, and yet fall so quietly that they do not disturb the notes that dance in the rays.

8. As you can take and divide the water all but infinitely, and it will take the shape of every containing vessel; so into every soul according to its capacities, according to its shape, according to its needs, the blessed presence of the God of our strength shall come.

9. The Lord may seem to sleep on his hard, wooden pillow in the stern of the little fishing-boat, and even while the frail craft begins to fill may show no sign of help. But ere the waves have rolled over her, the cry of fear that yet trusts, and of trust that yet fears, wakes Him who knew the need, even while He seemed to slumber, and one mighty word as of a master to some petulant slave, "Peace! be still," hushes the confusion, and rebukes the fear, and rewards the faith.

10. Whence come these hopes, cherished in spite of all failures? They are like morning dreams which the proverb tells us are true.

11. As distance has paled other lights and hidden lower watch-towers below the horizon, have we not

learned thereby to estimate more truly the brightness of the one undying flame which burns across the waste nor knows diminution by space, nor extinction by time, and to measure more accurately the height of that rallying point for the nations which towers higher and higher as we recede from it.

12. What a wretched humiliation for a man with such a nature to be the serf of such a lord, to be, as Milton says, "the dejected and down-trodden vassal of perdition!"

13. Thunder and lightning are child's play compared with the energy that goes to make the falling dews and quiet rains.

14. "The least flower with a brimming cup may stand
And share its dewdrop with another near."

15. The tramp of the hours goes on. The poets paint them as a linked chorus of rosy forms, garlanded and clasping hands as they dance onwards. So they may be to some of us at some moments. So they may seem as they approach, but those who come hold the hands of those who go, and that troop has no rosy light upon their limbs, their garlands are faded, the sunshine falls not upon the grey and shrouded shapes, as they steal ghost-like through the gloom—and ever and ever the bright

and laughing sisters pass on into that funeral band, which grows and moves away from us unceasing.

16. The material is perishable—but yet how much more enduring than we! The pavements we walk upon, the coals in our grates—how many millenniums old are they? The pebble you kick aside with your foot—how many generations will it outlast? Go into a museum, and you will see hanging there, little the worse for centuries, battered shields, notched swords, and gaping helmets—ay, what has become of the bright eyes that once flashed the light of battle through the bars, what has become of the strong hands that once gripped the hilts? “The knights are dust,” and “their good swords are” *not* “rust.” The material lasts after its owner.

17. I do not know why a man should be either regretful or afraid, as he watches the hungry sea eating away this “bank and shoal of time” upon which he stands, even though the tide has all but reached his feet; if he knows that God’s strong hand will be stretched forth to him at the moment when the sand dissolves from under him, and will draw him out of many waters, and place him high above the floods in that stable land where there is “no more sea.”

18. This universal condition of sinfulness is plainly, and, in the deepest sense of the word, un-

natural ; a fungus, not a true growth ; a monstrosity or abnormal development ; a diseased excrescence or wen, and not sound, healthy flesh.

19. I know few things sadder—unless we believe in Christ, the Deliverer—than that indestructible hope with which a thousand sinful generations have lived and died without its fulfilment. What countless unfulfilled aspirations, what baffled trust, what gleams of light that faded and seemed treacherous as the morning red that dies into rainy grey before the day is old !

20. Seed corn is found in a mummy case. The poor form beneath the painted lid is brown and hard, and more than half of it gone to pungent powder, and the man that once lived has faded utterly ; but the handful of seed has its mysterious life in it, and when it is sown, in due time the green blade pushes above English soil, as it would have done under the shadow of the Pyramids four thousand years ago, and its produce waves in a hundred harvest-fields to day.

21. The money in your purses now will some of it bear the head of a king that died half a century ago. It is bright and useful ;—where are all the people that in turn said they “owned” it ?

22. Other June days will come, and the old rose-trees will flower round houses where unborn men will then be living ; when the present possessor is gone to nourish the roots of the roses in the graveyard.

23. Can you fill up the swamps of the Mississippi with any cart-loads of faggots you can fling in ? Can you fill your souls with anything which belongs to this fleeting life ?

24. Hope, which streams upon the most lurid masses of opaque cloud till their gloom begins to glow with an inward lustre, and softens into solemn purples and reds.

25. One does not like altering words so familiar as those of our translation of the Bible, which have sacredness from association and a melancholy music in their rhythm.

26. Did you ever stand upon the shore on some day of that "uncertain weather when gloom and glory meet together," and notice how swiftly there went racing over miles of billows, a darkening that quenched all the play of colour in the waves, as if suddenly the angel of the waters had spread his broad wings between sun and sea, and then how in another moment as swiftly flits away, and with a burst the light blazes out again, and leagues of ocean

flash into green, and violet, and blue. So fleeting, so utterly perishable, are our lives for all their seeming, solid permanency, "Shadows in a career," as George Herbert has it—breath going out of the nostrils.

27. The crested waves seem heaped together as they recede from the eye till they reach the horizon, where miles of storm are seen but as a line of spray. So when a man looks back upon his life, if it have been a godless one, be sure of this, that it will be a dark and cheerless retrospect over a tossing waste, with a white rim of wandering, barren foam, vexed by tempest.

28. It is the prismatic halo and ring of eternity round this poor glass of time that gives it all its dignity, all its meaning.

29. As in some ancestral home in which a family has lived for centuries—son after father has rested in these great chambers, and been safe behind the strong walls; so, age after age, they who love Him abide in God. "Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations."

30. Christ alone shows us that the black walls of the prison-house where we toil, solid seeming though they be, high above our power to scale, and

clammy with the sighs of a thousand generations, are undermined and tottering.

31. Most men seem to think that they have gone to the very bottom of the thing when they have classified the gifts of fortune as good or evil, according as they produce pleasure or pain. But what is a poor, superficial classification. It is like taking and arranging books by their bindings and flowers by their colours.

32. You and I write our lives as if on one of those manifold writers which you use. A thin, filmy sheet *here*, a bit of black paper below it; but the writing goes through upon the next page. And when the blackness that divides two worlds is swept away *there*—the history of each life, written by ourselves, remains legible in eternity.

33. The prophecies are like the diagrams in treatises on perspective, in which diverging lines are drawn from the eye, enclosing a square or other figure, and which, as they recede further from the point of view, enclose a figure, the same in shape, but of greater dimensions. There is a historical event foretold, the fall of Jerusalem. It is close up to the eyes of the disciples, and is comparatively small. Carry out the lines that touch its corners and define its shape, upon the far distant curtain of

the dim future there is thrown a like figure, infinitely bigger, the coming of Jesus Christ to judge the world.

34. The eye has a curious power, which they call persistence of vision, of retaining the impression made upon it, and therefore of seeming to see the object for a definite time after it has really been withdrawn. If you whirl a bit of blazing stick round, you will see a circle of fire though there is only a point moving rapidly in the circle. The eye has its memory like the soul. And the soul has its power of persistence, like the eye, and that power is sometimes kindled into activity by the fact of loss.

35. The loss of dear ones should stamp their image on our hearts, and set it as in a golden glory. Vain regret, absorbed brooding over what is gone, a sorrow kept gaping long after it should have been healed, is like a grave-mound off which desperate love has pulled turf and flowers in the vain attempt to clasp the cold hand below.

36. Sorrow clears away the thick trees, and lets the sunlight into the forest shades, and then in time corn will grow.

37. As they tell of a Christian father, who, riding by one of the great lakes of Switzerland all day

long, on his journey to the Church Council that was absorbing his thoughts, said towards evening to the deacon who was pacing beside him, "Where is the lake?" so you and I, journeying along by the margin of this great flood of things when wild storm sweeps across it, or when the sunbeams glint upon its blue waters, "and birds of peace sit brooding on the charmed wave," shall be careless of the changeful sea if the eye looks beyond the visible and beholds the unseen, the unchanging real presences that make glory in the darkest lives, and "sunshine in the shady place."

38. The total length of day and night all the year round is the same at the North Pole and at the Equator—half and half. Only, in the one place, it is half and half for four-and-twenty hours at a time, and in the other, the night lasts through gloomy months of winter, and the day is bright for unbroken weeks of summer. But, when you come to add them up at the year's end, the man that shivers in the ice, and the man that pants beneath the beams from the zenith, have had the same length of sunshine and of darkness. It does not matter much at what degrees between the Equator and the Pole you and I live; when the thing comes to be made up we shall be all pretty much on an equality.

39. The narrow gorge stretches before us, with its dark overhanging cliffs that almost shut out the sky;

the path is rough and set with sharp pebbles ; it is narrow, winding, steep ; often it seems to be barred by some huge rock that gets across it, and there is barely room for the broken ledge yielding slippery footing between the beetling cliff above and the steep slope beneath that dips so quickly to the black torrent below. All is gloomy, damp, hard ; and if we look upwards the glen becomes more savage as it rises, and armed foes hold the very throat of the pass. But, however long, however barren, however rugged, however black, however trackless, we may see, if we will, a bright Form descending the rocky way with radiant eyes and calm lips, God's messenger, Hope ;—and the rough rocks are like the doorway through which she comes near to us in our weary struggle.

40. The tastes which knit us to the perishable world, the yearnings for Babylonish garments and wedges of gold, must be coerced and subdued.

41. Never mind how black it may look ahead, or how frowning the rocks. From between their narrowest gorge you may see, if you will, the guide whom God has sent you, and that Angel of Hope will light up all the darkness, and will only fade away when she is lost in the sevenfold brightness of that upper land, whereof our "God Himself is sun

and moon"—the true Canaan, to whose everlasting mountains the steep way of life has climbed at last through valleys of trouble, and of weeping, and of the shadow of death.

42. Earthly hopes or sad remembrances die in the fruition of a present God, all-sufficient for mind, and heart, and will—even as the sun when it is risen with a burning heat may scorch and wither the weeds that grow about the base of the fruitful tree whose deeper roots are but warmed by the rays that ripen the rich clusters which it bears.

43. The ordinary notion of a special providence goes perilously near the belief that God's will is less concerned in some parts of a man's life than in others. It is very much like desecrating and secularising a whole land by the very act of focussing the sanctity in some single consecrated shrine.

44. The light of hope which fills our sky is like that which, on happy summer nights, lives till morning in the calm west, and with its colourless, tranquil beauty, tells of a yesterday of unclouded splendour, and prophesies a to-morrow yet more abundant.

45. The glow from a sun that is set, the experience of past deliverances, is the truest light of hope to light our way through the night of life.

46. When we, in our wise husbandry, have irrigated the soil with the gathered results of our sorrows, the heavens bend over us, and weep their gracious tears, and "the rain also covereth it with blessings."

47. The slope of the valley of trouble is ever upwards. Never mind how dark the shadow of death which stretches athwart it is. If there were no sun there would be no shadow : presently the sun will be right overhead, and there will be no shadow then.

48. The heart of God opens its hidden storehouses for us as we approach, like some star that, as one gets nearer to it, expands its disc and glows into rich colour, where at a distance was but pallid silver.

49. Joy and sorrow, and hope and fear, cannot be continuous. They must needs wear themselves out and fade into a grey uniformity, like mountain summits when the sun has left them.

50. The constant wash of the sea of life undermines the cliffs and wastes the coasts. The tear and wear of external occupations is ever acting upon our religious life.

51. Travellers tell us that the constant rubbing of the sand on Egyptian hieroglyphs removes every trace of colour, and even effaces the deep-cut characters from basalt rocks. So the unceasing attrition of multitudinous trifles will take all the bloom off your religion, and efface the name of the King cut on the tablets of your hearts, if you do not counteract them by constant, earnest effort.

52. If the summit reached can only be held by earnest endeavour, how much more is needed to struggle up from the valleys below.

53. Our Captain provides us with an inexhaustible strength, to which we may fully trust. We shall not exhaust it by any demands that we can make upon it. We shall only brighten it up, like the nails in a well-used shoe, the heads of which are polished by stumbling and scrambling over rocky roads. "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days so shall thy strength be."

54. Did you ever see that electric light which is made by directing a strong stream upon two small pieces of carbon? As the electricity strikes upon these and turns their blackness into a fiery blaze, it eats away their substance as it changes them into light. But there is an arrangement in the lamp by which a fresh surface is continually being brought

into the path of the beam, and so the light continues without wavering, and blazes on. The carbon is our human nature, black and dull in itself; the electric beam is the swift energy of God, which makes us light in the Lord.

55. For a little while it is true, even in the life of nature, that our power grows with our days. But we soon reach the watershed, and then the opposite comes to be true.

56. Go into some of the great fortresses in continental countries, and you will find the store-rooms full of ammunition and provisions; bread enough and biscuits enough, it would look, for half the country, laid up there, and a deep well somewhere or other about the courtyard. What does that mean? It means fighting—that is what it means. So we are brought into the strong pavilion, so well provisioned, so well fortified and defended; that means that we shall need all the strength that is to be found in those thick walls, and all the sustenance that is to be found in those gorged magazines; and all the refreshment that is to be drawn from that fair, and full, and inexhaustible fountain, before the battle is over and the victory won.

57. The portion of Asher was the rocky sea-coast. The sharp, jagged rocks would cut anything

of leather to pieces long before the day's march was over ; but the tribe has got its feet shod with metal, and the rocks which they have to stumble over will only strike fire from their shoes. "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass."

58. The oldest angels, says Swedenborg, seem the youngest.

59. The years that are gone ought to have drawn us somewhat away from our hot pursuing after earthly and perishable things. They should have enriched us with memories of God's loving care, and lighted all the sky behind with a glow which is reflected on the path before us, and becomes calm confidence in His unfailing goodness. They should have given us power and skill for the conflicts that yet remain, as the Red Indians believe that the strength of every defeated and scalped enemy passes into his conqueror's arms.

60. If for us, drawing nearer to the end is drawing nearer to the light, our faces shall be brightened with that light which we approach, and our path shall be "as the shining light which shines more and more unto the noon-tide of the day," because we are closer to the very fountain of heavenly radiance, and growingly bathed and flooded with the outgoings of His glory.

61. Here the unresting beat of the waves of the sea of time gnaws away the bank and shoal whereon we stand, but there each roll of that great ocean of eternity shall but spread new treasures at our feet and add new acres to our immortal heritage.

62. "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning." What a picture that is ! Think of the wakeful, sick man, tossing restless all the night on his tumbled bed, wracked with pain made harder to bear by the darkness. How often his heavy eye is lifted to the window-pane, to see if the dawn has not yet begun to tint it with a grey glimmer ! How he groans, "Would God it were morning !" Or, think of some unarmed and solitary man, benighted in the forest, and hearing the wild beasts growl, and scream, and bark all round, while his fire dies down, and he knows that his life depends on the morning breaking soon.

63. As some out-numbered army, unable to make head against its enemies in the open, flees to the shelter of some hill-fortress, perched upon a crag, and, taking up the drawbridge, cannot be reached by anything that has not wings ; so David, hard pressed by his foes, flees into God to hide him, and feels secure behind these strong walls.

64. All our cries of sorrow, and all our acknowledgements of weakness and need, and all our

plaintive beseechings, should be inlaid, as it were, between two layers of brighter and gladder thought like dull rock between two veins of gold.

65. It may be long before the morning breaks, but even while the darkness lasts a faint air begins to stir among the sleeping leaves, the promise of the dawn, and the first notes of half-awakened birds prelude the full chorus that will hail the sunrise.

66. It is beautiful, I think, to see, how in the compass of this one little Psalm (Psalm lix.) the singer has, as it were, wrought himself clear, and sung himself out of his fears. The stream of his thought, like some mountain torrent, turbid at first, has run itself bright and sparkling. The first courses of his psalm, like those of some great building, are laid deep down in the darkness, but the shining summit is away up there in the sunlight, and God's glittering glory is sparkingly reflected from the highest point.

67. When troubles are past, and their meaning is plainer, and we possess their results in the weight of glory which they have wrought out for us, we shall be able to look back on them all as the mercies of the God of our mercy, even as when a man looks down from the mountain-top upon the mists and the clouds through which he has passed, and sees them

all smitten by the sunshine that gleams upon them from above.

68. God does not turn people out to scramble over rough mountains with thin-soled boots on. When an Alpine climber is preparing to go away into Switzerland for rock work, the first thing he does is to get a pair of strong shoes, with plenty of iron nails in the soles of them. Each of us may be sure that if God sends us on stony paths He will provide us with strong shoes, and will not send us out on any journey for which He does not equip us well.

69. An old saying tells us that we do not go to heaven in silver slippers, and the reason is because the road is rough. The "primrose way" leads somewhere else, and *it* may be walked on "delicately."

70. Those two ships that went away a while ago upon the brave, and, as some people thought, desperate task of finding the North Pole—any one that looked upon them, as they lay in Portsmouth Roads, might know that it was no holiday cruise they were meant for. The thickness of the sides, the strength of the cordage, the massiveness of the equipments, did not look like pleasure-sailing.

71. Many a proffered succour from heaven goes past us, because we are not standing upon our watch-tower to catch the far-off indications of its approach, and to fling open the gates of our heart for its entrance. How the beleaguered garrison, that knows a relieving force is on the march, strain their eyes to catch the first glint of the sunshine on their spears as they top the pass !

72. Unless you put out your water-jars when it rains you will catch no water ; if you do not watch for God coming to help you, God's watching to be gracious will be of no good at all to you.

73. Do we pore over God's gifts, scrutinising them as eagerly as a gold-seeker does the quartz in his pan, to detect every shining speck of the precious metal.

74. Of what avail is it that a strong hand from the cliff should fling the safety-line with true aim to the wreck, if no eye on the deck is watching for it? It hangs there, useless and unseen, and then it drops into the sea, and every soul on board is drowned. It is our own fault if we are ever overwhelmed by the tasks, or difficulties, or sorrows of life.

75. If the soul be full of tumult and jangling noises, God's voice is little likely to be heard. As

in some kinds of deafness, a perpetual noise in the head prevents hearing any other sounds ; the rush of our own fevered blood, and the throbbing of our own nerves, hinder our catching His tones.

76. It is the calm lake which mirrors the sun, the least catpaw wrinkling the surface wipes out all the reflected glories of the heavens. If we would mirror God our souls must be calm.

77. Put your own selves by the side of this Psalmist—"Truly my soul waiteth upon God,"—and honestly measure the contrast. It is like the difference between some crowded market-place, all full of noisy traffickers, ringing with shouts, blazing in sunshine, and the interior of the quiet cathedral that looks down on it all, where are coolness and subdued light, and silence and solitude.

78. All emotion tends to exhaustion, as surely as a pendulum to rest, or as an Eastern torrent to dry up.

79. Before the throne of the Great King, His servants are to stand like those long rows of attendants we see on the walls of eastern temples, silent, with folded arms, straining their ears to hear, and bracing their muscles to execute his whispered commands, or even his gesture and his glance.

80. A man's will should be an echo, not a voice ; the echo of God, not the voice of self. It should be silent, as some sweet instrument is silent till the owner's hand touches the keys.

81. We have to stop our ears to the noises around, however sweet the songs, and to close many an avenue through which the world's music might steal in.

82. As the flowers follow the sun, and silently hold up their petals to be tinted and enlarged by his shining, so must we—if we would know the joy of God—hold our souls, wills, hearts, and minds still before Him whose voice commands, whose love warms, whose truth makes fair our whole being.

83. There can be no greater slight and dishonour to a giver than to have his gifts neglected. You give something that has perhaps cost you much, or which, at any rate, has your heart in it, to your child, or other dear one ; would it not wound you, if a day or two after you found it tossing about among a heap of unregarded trifles ? Suppose that some of those Rajahs that received presents on the recent royal visit to India had gone out from the durbar and flung them into the kennel, that would have been an insult and disaffection, would it not ? But these illustrations are trivial by the side of our treatment of the "giving God."

84. Most of us are far less happy than we might be, if we had learned the Divine art of wringing the last drop of good out of everything. After our rude attempts at smelting there is a great deal of valuable matter left in the dross, which a wiser system would extract.

85. One wonders when one gets a glimpse of how much of the raw material of happiness goes to waste in the manufacture in all our lives.

86. There, in his little niche, like some statue of a forgotten saint, scarce seen amidst the glories of a great cathedral, "Quartus, a brother," stands to all time. Probably he may have been a Greek by birth, and so have had to stretch his hand across a deep crevasse of national antipathy, in order to clasp the hand of his brethren in the great city.

87. It is impossible for us to throw ourselves completely back to the conditions of things which the Gospel found. The world then was like some great field of cooled lava on the slopes of a volcano, all broken up by a labyrinth of clefts and cracks, at the bottom of which one can see the flicker of sulphurous flames.

88. Sometimes it is true about people, as well as about scenery, that "distance lends enchantment to the view."

89. When a speaker sees the reporters in front of him, he weighs his words.

90. Do not let thunder-clouds, however heavy their lurid piles, shut out from you the blue that is in your sky.

91. Lean all your weight on God, as on some strong staff, and depend upon it that support will never yield nor crack ; there will no splinters run into your palms from it.

92. "Simply to Thy cross I cling," as some half-drowned, shipwrecked sailor, flung up on the beach, clasps a point of rock, and is safe from the power of the waves that beat around him.

93. Temptations lurk around us, like serpents in the grass ; they beset us in open ferocity, like lions in our path.

94. "As far from danger as from fear,
While love, almighty love, is near."

95. As God guards me, so I stand expectant before Him, as one in a besieged town, upon the ramparts there, looks eagerly out across the plains to see the coming of the long-expected succours.

96. Here is the stifling smoke, coming up from some newly-lighted fire of green wood, black and

choking, and solid in its coils ; but as the fire burns up, all the smoke-wreaths will be turned into one flaming spire, full of light and warmth. Do you turn your smoke into fire, your fear into faith.

97. "And he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they should *cleave* unto the Lord." We may follow out the metaphor of the word in many illustrations. For instance, here is a strong prop, and here is the trailing, lithe feebleness of the vine. Gather up the leaves that are creeping all along the ground, and coil them around that support, and up they go straight towards the heavens. Here is a limpet, in some pond or other, left by the tide, and it has relaxed its grasp a little. Touch it with your finger, and it grips fast to the rock, and you will want a hammer before you can dislodge it. There is a traveller groping along some narrow, broken path, where the chamois would tread cautiously, his guide in front of him. His head reels, and his limbs tremble, and he is all but over, but he grasps the strong hand of the man in front of him, or lashes himself to him by the rope, and he can walk steadily.

98. Jesus Christ puts himself at the head of the mystic march of the generations, and, like the mysterious angel that Joshua saw in the plain by

Jericho, makes the lofty claim : "Nay, but as *Captain* of the Lord's host am I come up."

99. No doubt there still remain obscurities enough as to what we ought to do, to call for the best exercise of patient wisdom ; but an enormous proportion of them vanish, like mist when the sun looks through, when once we honestly set ourselves to find out where the pillared Light is guiding.

100. Let us take heed, lest turning away from Christ we follow the will-o'-the-wisps of our own fancies, or the dancing lights, born of putrescence, that flicker above the swamps, for they will lead us into doleful lands where evil things haunt, and into outer darkness.





CHAPTER VIII.



F AITH and fear do blend, thank God. They are as oil and water in a man's soul, and the oil will float above, and quiet the waves.

2. Not when the sun shines, but when the tempest blows and the wind howls about his ears, a man gathers his cloak round him, and cleaves fast to his supporter. The midnight sea lies all black ; but when it is cut into by the oar, or divided and churned by the paddle, it flashes up into phosphorescence. And so it is from the tumults and agitations of man's spirit that there is struck out the light of man's faith. There is the bit of flint and the steel that comes hammering against it ; and it is the contact of these two that brings out the spark.

3. A victorious faith will

“—rise large and slow
From out the fluctuations of our souls,
As from the dim and tumbling sea
Starts the completed moon.”

4. When war desolates a land, the peasants fly from their undefended huts to the shelter of the castle on the hill-top, but they cannot reach the safety of the strong walls without climbing the steep road. So, when calamity darkens round us, or our sense of sin and sorrow shakes our hearts, we need effort to resolve and to carry into practice the resolution “I flee unto Thee to hide me.”

5. “In our embers is something that doth live.”

6. It was not Moses, nor Jethro, with his quick Arab eye and knowledge of the ground, that guided the Israelites ; but that stately, solemn pillar, that floated before them. How they must have watched for the gathering up of its folds as they lay softly stretched along the tabernacle roof ! and for its sinking down, and spreading itself out, like a misty hand of blessing, as it sailed in the van.

7. In danger Christ lashes us to Himself, as Alpine guides do when there is perilous ice to get over.

8. There should always be a good clear space between the guiding ark and you, "about two thousand cubits by measure," that there may be no mistake about the road. It is neither reverent nor wise to be treading on the heels of our Guide in our eager confidence that we know where He wants us to go.

9. Do not let the warmth by the camp-fire, or the pleasantness of the shady places where your tent is pitched, keep you there when the cloud lifts.

10. When we know not where to strike the foes that seem invulnerable, like the warrior who was dipped in the magic stream, or clothed in mail impenetrable as rhinoceros' hide, He will make us wise to know the one spot where a wound is fatal.

11. "In our own strength we nothing can :
Full soon were we down-ridden"—
as Luther has taught us to sing.

12. The barren rocks and white snow glow with purple as the setting sun touches them.

13. The wild cliffs of the eastern region where Peniel lay, or the savage fastnesses in the southern wilderness, a day's march from Hebron, where Jacob lived so long, come back to his memory amid the flat, clay land of Egypt ; and their towering height,

their immovable firmness, their cool shade, their safe shelter, spoke to him of the unalterable might and impregnable defence which he had found in God.

14. Take care, in the old-fashioned phrase, "of running before you are sent."

15. As on some rocky site in Palestine, where a thousand generations in succession have made their fortresses, one may see stones laid with the bevel that tells of early Jewish masonry, and above them Roman work, and higher still masonry of crusading times, and above it the building of to-day; so we, each age in our turn, build on the great Rock-foundation, dwell safe there for our little lives, and are laid to peaceful rest in a sepulchre in the rock.

16. Commentators tell us that on the first evening of the Feast of Tabernacles, two huge golden lamps, which stood one on each side of the altar of burnt offering in the temple court, were lighted as the night began to fall, and poured out a brilliant flood over temple, and city, and deep gorge; while far into the midnight, troops of rejoicing worshippers clustered about them with dance and song.

17. The cloud of the humanity, "the veil, that is to say, His flesh," enfolds and tempers; and through its transparent folds reveals, even while it swathes, the Godhead. Like some fleecy vapour flitting across the sun, and irradiated by its light, it enables our weak eyes to see light, and not darkness, in the else intolerable blaze.

18. The men in the rear who guard the camp, and keep the communications open, may deserve honours, and crosses, and prize-money as much as their comrades who led the charge that cut through the enemy's line and scattered their ranks.

19. Some dream of Divine help in the struggle of battle has floated through the minds and been enshrined in the legends of many people, as when the panoplied Athene has been descried leading the Grecian armies, or, through the dust of conflict, the gleaming armour and white horses of the Twin Brethren far in advance of the armies of Rome.

20. As a father in old days might have taken his little boy out to the butts, and put a bow in his hand, and given him his first lesson in archery, directing his unsteady aim by his own firmer finger, and lending the strength of his wrist to his child's feebler pull, so God does with us. The sure, strong hand is laid on ours, and is "profitable to direct."

21. Like some man that goes out in the morning with his seed-basket full, and finds the whole field where he would fain have sown covered already with the springing weeds or burdened with the hard rock, and has to bring back the germs of possible life to bless and fertilise some other soil : so He that comes back weeping, bearing the precious seed that He found no field to sow in, knows a deeper sadness, which has in it no prophecy of joy.

22. Like intertwining snakes, the loathly heads are separate ; but the slimy convolutions are twisted indistinguishably together, and all unbelief has in it the nature of perversity—as all perversity has in it the nature of unbelief.

23. We grieve Christ most when we will not let Him pour His love upon us, but turn a sullen, unresponsive unbelief towards His pleading grace, as some glacier shuts out the sunshine from the mountain-side with its thick-ribbed ice.

24. It is hard to keep the arrow-point firm when the heart throbs and the hand shakes.

25. The man that cannot be angry at evil lacks enthusiasm for good. Better the heat of the tropics, though sometimes the thunderstorms may gather, than the white calmness of the frozen poles.

26. God's anger is His love thrown back upon itself from unreceptive and unloving hearts ; just as a wave that would roll in smooth, unbroken, green beauty into the open door of some sea-cave is dashed back in spray and foam from some grim rock.

27. The feelings of Christ on looking on sin were like a piece of woven stuff with a pattern on either side ; on one the fiery threads—the wrath ; on the other the silvery tints of sympathetic pity. A warp of wrath, a woof of sorrow, and a dew of flame married and knit together.

28. The fluttering leaves and bending branches need a firm stem and deep roots. The firm stem looks noblest in its unmoved strength, when it is contrasted with a cloud of light foliage dancing in the wind.

29. "Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known Me?" The days had seemed to go so slowly. He longed that the fire which He came to fling on earth were already kindled ; and the moments seemed to drop so slowly from the urn of time.

30. There is something that stimulates the imagination in these mere shadows of men that we meet in the New Testament story. What a

strange fate that is to be made immortal by a line in this book—immortal and yet so unknown!

31. "We all are changed by still degrees ;
All but the basis of the soul."

And "the basis of the soul," in the truest sense, is that one God-laid foundation, on which whosoever buildeth shall never be confounded, nor ever need to change with changing time.

32. How beautiful it is to see a man, below whose feet time is crumbling away, holding firmly by the Lord whom he has loved and served all his days, and finding that the pillar of cloud, which guided him while he lived, begins to glow in its heart of fire as the shadows fall, and is a pillar of light to guide him when he comes to die.

33. Good husbandry does not grind up all the year's wheat for loaves for one's own eating, but keeps some of it for seed to be scattered in the furrows.

34. The standing water gets green scum on it. The close-shut barn breeds weevils and smut. Let the water run. Fling the seed broadcast. Thou shalt find it "after many days."

35. There never was such a lonely soul on this earth as Christ's, because there never was another

so pure and loving. "The little hills rejoice *together*," as the Psalm says, "on every side," but the great Alpine peak is alone there, away up amongst the cold and the snows—the solitary Christ, the uncomprehended Christ, the unaccepted Christ.

36. "How long must I be with you?" says the loving Teacher, who is prepared ungrudgingly to give His slow scholar as much time as he needs to learn his lesson. He is not impatient, but He desires to finish the task; and yet He is ready to let the scholar's dulness determine the duration of His stay.

37. "Give all thou hast; high Heaven rejects the lore of nicely-calculated less or more."

38. Depend upon it, if for an instant we turn away our heads, the thievish birds that flutter over us will be down upon the precious seed that is in our basket, or that we have sown in the furrows, and it will be gone. Watch, that ye may keep.

39. There was never an unused talent rolled up in a handkerchief yet, but when it was taken out and put into the scale, it was lighter than when it was committed to the keeping of the earth. Gifts that are used fructify.

40. Many a man in David's little band saw nothing but cold, grey stone where David saw the

flashing armour of the heavenly warrior. To the one all the mountain blazed with fiery chariots, to the other it was a lone hill-side, with the wind moaning among the rocks.

41. A man coming out of some room blazing with gas cannot all at once see into the violet depths of the mighty heavens, that lie above him with all their shimmering stars.

42. The protection which we have is protection in, and not protection from, strife and danger. It is a filter which lets the icy cold water of sorrow drop numbing upon us, but keeps back the poison that was in it.

43. As a child sometimes carries a tender-winged butterfly in the globe of its two hands that the bloom on its wings may not be ruffled by its fluttering, so God carries our feeble unarmoured souls enclosed in the covert of His Almighty hand.

44. The devotion which is to be diffused through our lives must be first concentrated and evolved in our prayers. These are the gathering grounds which feed the river. The life that was all one long prayer needed the mountain-top and the nightly converse with God.

45. That was truly "The Lord's Prayer" which He poured out beneath the olives in the moonlight.

46. So manifold are the aspects of God's infinite sufficiency, that every soul, in every possible variety of circumstance, will find there just what will suit it. That deep fountain is like some of those fabled springs which gave forth whatsoever precious draught any thirsty lips asked.

47. Mahanaim is still the name of every place where a man who loves God pitches his tent.

48. We are in the centre of the encampment—as they put the cattle and the sick in the midst of the encampment on the prairies when they fear an assault from the Indians—because we are the weakest.

49. We cannot too firmly hold, or too profoundly feel, that an unbroken continuity of supplies of God's grace—unbroken and bright as a sunbeam reaching in one golden shaft all the way from the sun to the earth—is His purpose concerning us.

50. Bars of uncoined treasure and ingots of massy gold lie in God's storehouses, to be put into circulation as soon as we need, and can use them.

51. We cling to what is familiar in the very furniture of our houses; and yet we are ever being

forced to accept what is strange and new, and, like some fresh article in a room, it is out of harmony with the well-worn things that you have seen standing in their corners for years. It takes some time for the raw look to wear off, and for us to "get used to it," as we say. So is it, though often for deeper reasons, in far more important things.

52. No man is less likely to come to the knowledge of the truth than he who is always deep in love with some new thought, "the Cynthia of the minute," and ever ready to barter "old lamps for new ones."

53. Just as we may have looked upon some mountain scene, where all the highest summits were wrapt in mist, and the lower hills looked mighty and majestic, until some puff of wind came and rolled up the curtain that had shrined and hidden the icy pinnacles and peaks that were higher up. And as that solemn white Apocalypse rose and towered to the heavens, we forgot all about the green hills below, because our eyes beheld the mighty summits that live amongst the stars and sparkle white through eternity.

54. The never-ceasing boom of the great ocean as it breaks on the beach, drowns all smaller sounds.

55. We wonder at the smooth working of the machinery for feeding a great city ; and how, day by day, the provisions come at the right time, and are parted out among hundreds of thousands of homes. But we seldom think of the punctual love, the perfect knowledge, the profound wisdom which cares for us all, and is always in time with its gifts.

56. Other plants which the "Heavenly Father hath not planted" have their zones of vegetation and die outside certain degrees of latitude ; but the seed of the kingdom is like corn, an exotic nowhere, for wherever man lives it will grow, and yet an exotic everywhere, for it came down from heaven.

57. The Gospel has its mysteries no less than those old systems of heathenism which fenced round their deepest truths with solemn barriers, only to be passed by the initiated. But the difference lies here—that its mysteries are taught at first to the neophytes, and that the sum of them lies in the words which we learned at our mother's knees so long ago that we have forgotten that they were ever new to us.

58. The mount of Transfiguration must be left, for all there were there Moses and Elias, and the cloud of the Divine Glory, and the words of approval from Heaven, because there was a demoniac boy,

and his weeping, despairing father, needing Christ down below.

59. Our Lord's miracles have been called "the great bell before the sermon," but they are more than that. They are themselves no unimportant part of the sermon.

60. Think of "*all* the misery that is done under the sun." If it could be made visible, what a dark pall would swathe the world, an atmosphere of sorrow rolling ever with it through space.

61. However we may differ from one another, in training, in habits, in cast of thought, in idiosyncrasies of character, in circumstances, in age, all these are but the upper strata which vary locally. Beneath all these there lie everywhere the solid foundations of the primeval rocks, and beneath these, again, the glowing, central mass, the flaming heart of the world. Christianity sends its shaft right down through all these upper and local beds, till it reaches the deepest depths, which are the same in every man—the obstinate wilfulness of a nature adverse from God, and the yet deeper-lying longings of a soul that flames with the consciousness of God, and yearns for rest and peace.

62. As the chalk cliffs in the South, that rear themselves hundreds of feet above the crawling sea

beneath, are all made up of the minute skeletons of microscopic animalculæ ; so life, mighty and awful, as having eternal consequences, life that towers beetling over the sea of eternity, is made up of minute incidents, of trifling duties, of small tasks ; and if thou art not “ faithful in that which is least,” thou art unfaithful in the whole.

63. The energy of the Divine power is as mightily at work here now sustaining us in life, as it was when He flung forth stars and systems like sparks from a forge, and willed the universe into being.

64. The ancient promise, long repeated, has come sounding down through the echoing halls of the centuries, and rings in our ears as fresh as when first it was spoken—“ There remaineth a rest for the people of God.”

65. God works with bruised reeds, and out of them makes polished shafts, pillars in His house.

66. Joy may grow on the very face of danger, as a slender rose-bush flings its bright sprays and fragrant blossoms over the lip of a cataract.

67. We get the table in the wilderness here. It is as when the son of some great king comes back from foreign soil to his father's dominions,

and is welcomed at every stage in his journey to the capital with pomp of festival, and messengers from the throne, until he enters at last his palace home, where the travel-stained robe is laid aside, and he sits down with his father at his table.

68. The sheep are led by many a way, sometimes through sweet meadows, sometimes limping along sharp-flinted, dusty highways, sometimes high up over rough, rocky mountain-passes, sometimes down through deep gorges, with no sunshine in their gloom ; but they are ever being led to one place, and when the hot day is over they are gathered into one fold, and the sinking sun sees them safe, where no wolf can come, nor any robber climb up any more, but all shall rest for ever under the Shepherd's eye.

69. Memory softens down all the past into one uniform tone, as the mellowing distance wraps in one solemn purple the mountains which, when close to them, have many a barren rock and gloomy rift.

70. When "Hope enchanted smiles," with the light of the future in her blue eyes, there is ever something awful in their depths, as if they saw some dark visions behind the beauty.

71. The assurance that the hand which strikes is the hand which binds up, makes the stroke a

blessing, sucks the poison out of the wound of sorrow, and turns the rod which smites into the staff to lean on.

72. Life is a sore fight ; but to the Christian man, in spite of all the tumult, life is a festal banquet. There stand the enemies, ringing him round with cruel eyes, waiting to be let slip upon him like eager dogs round the poor beast of the chase. But, for all that, here is spread a table in the wilderness, made ready by invisible hands ; and the grim-eyed foe is held back in the leash till the servant of God has fed and been strengthened.

73. God is all, but *thou* canst work ! These two streams of truth are like the rain-shower that falls upon the water-shed of a country. The one half flows down the one side of the everlasting hills, and the other down the other. Falling into rivers that water different continents, they at length find the sea, separated by the distance of half the globe. But the sea into which they fall is one, in every creak and channel.

74. Your horizon ought to be full of fear, if your gaze be limited to yourself ; but oh ! above our earthly horizon with its fogs, God's infinite blue stretches, untroubled by the mist and cloud which are earth-born.

75. Our seasons of communion, our hours on the mount, are to prepare for the sore, sad work in the plain ; and he is not the wisest disciple who tries to make the mount of Transfiguration the abiding place for himself and his Lord.

76. It is the hot noon-tide, and the desert lies baking in the awful glare, and every stone on the hills of Judæa burns the foot that touches it. But in that panting, breathless hour, here is a little green glen, with a quiet brooklet, and a moist, lush herbage all along its course, and great stones, that fling a black shadow over the dewy grass at their base ; and there would the shepherd lead his flock, while the “sunbeams like swords” are piercing everything beyond that hidden covert. Sweet silence broods there. The sheep feed and drink, and crouch in cool lairs till he calls them forth again. So God leads His children.

77. It is a rainy climate where half the days have rain in them ; and that is an unusually troubled life of which it can with any truth be affirmed that there has been as much darkness as sunshine in it.

78. The waters of happiness are not for a luxurious bath, where a man may lie, till like flax steeped too long, the very fibre be rooted out of him ; a quick plunge will brace him, and he will come out refreshed for work.

79. All the rest of Divine tranquillity is rest in rapid, vigorous, perpetual motion. Ay, it is just as it is with physical things : the looker-on sees the swiftest motion as the most perfect rest. The wheel revolves so fast that the eye cannot discern its movements. The cataract foaming down from the hill-side, when seen from half-way across the lake, seems to stand a silent, still, icy pillar.

80. God be thanked that the calm clouds which gather round the western, setting sun, and stretch their unmoving loveliness in perfect repose, and are bathed through and through with unflashing and tranquil light, seem to us in our busy lives and in our hot strife like blessed prophets of our state when we, too, shall lie cradled near the everlasting, unsetting Sun, and drink in, in still beauty of perpetual contemplation, all the glory of His face, nor know any more wind and tempest, rain and change.

81. Go out into the world and strip everything that appeals to you of its disguises ; and you will find it true that, where Christ is not, there—(let it woo ever so sweetly, and sing ever so melodiously) there is only a siren, that tempts you down beneath the sunny surface of pleasure to the black depths below, where she lives on dead men's bones.

82. Trust Christ ! and so thy soul shall no longer be like "the sea that cannot rest," full of turbulent wishes, full of passionate desires that come to nothing, full of endless moanings, like the homeless ocean that is ever working and never flings up any product of its work but yeasty foam and broken weeds ;—but thine heart shall become translucent and still, like some land-locked lake, where no winds rave nor tempests ruffle ; and on its calm surface there shall be mirrored the clear shining of the unclouded blue, and the perpetual light of the sun that never goes down.

83. Blessings here are only in blossom, sickly often, putting out very feeble shoots and tendrils ; and yonder, transplanted into their right soil, and in their native air, with heaven's sun upon them, they burst into richer beauty, and bring forth fruits of immortal life.

84. Your death may be but the passing from one degree of tranquillity to another, and the calm face of the corpse, whence all the lines of sorrow and care have faded utterly away, will be but a poor emblem of the perfect stillness into which the spirit has gone.

85. One of the apocryphal books says a truth "He that despiseth little things shall fall by little and little."

86. Just as two roads that diverge from each other at a very sharp angle, get the wider apart the further they go, till at last half a continent may be held bewixt them—the little deflection from the narrow line of Christian duty and simple faithfulness, it is only God's mercy that will prevent it from leading thee away out, out, out into the waste plains and doleful wildernesses, where all sinful, and dark, and foul things dwell for ever.

87. Small infidelities *are* infidelities, and will produce the greater. The little thief goes in at the narrow window, and opens the door for all the big ones.

88. God's very Being is rest. And yet that image that rises before us, statuesque, still in its placid tranquillity, is not repellent nor cold, is no dead marble likeness of life. That great ocean of the Divine nature which knows no storm nor billow, is yet not a tideless and stagnant sea.

89. It is comparatively easy to act nobly under the stimulus of extraordinary excitement, when the soul is all on fire, as a soldier will strike with giant strength in the crisis of a fight, and for the moment will be all unconscious of his bleeding wounds.

90. Most of us are living not screwed up to the

highest pitch. One of our wise old poets says—

“Who keeps no guard upon himself, is slack,
And rots to nothing at the next great thaw.”

91. Like the air which in the lungs needs to be broken up into small particles and diffused ere it parts with its vitalising principle to the blood ; so the minute acts of obedience, and the exhibition of the power of the Gospel in the thousand trifles of Christian lives, permeating everywhere, will vitalise the world and will preach the Gospel in such a fashion as never can be done by any single and occasional, though it may seem to be more lofty and more worthy, agency.

92. Just as the quality of life may be as perfect in the minutest animalculæ of which there may be millions in a cubic inch, and generations may die in an hour—just as perfect in the smallest insect as in “ behemoth, biggest born of earth ” ; so righteousness may be as completely embodied, as perfectly set forth, as fully operative, in the tiniest action that I can do, as in the largest that an immortal spirit can be set to perform.

93. The circle that is in a gnat’s eye is as true a circle as the one that holds within its sweep all the stars ; and the sphere that a dew-drop makes is as perfect a sphere as that of the world.

94. Like some of those creeping weeds that lie underground, and put up a little leaf here, and another one there ; and you dig down, fancying that their roots are short, but you find that they go creeping and tortuous below the surface, and the whole soil is full of them—so all sin holds on by one root.

95. The mass of trifles makes magnitude.

96. After all your work, your anxiety gets but such a little way down ; like some passing shower of rain, that only softens an inch of the hard-baked surface of the soil, and has nothing to do with fructifying the seed that lies feet below the reach of its useless moisture.

97. Shame on me if I am anxious ! for every lily of the field blows its beauty, and every bird of the air carols its song without sorrowful forboding ; and yet there is no *Father* in the heaven to them !

98. The heathen tendency in us all leads to an over-estimate of material good, and it is a question of circumstances whether that shall show itself in heaping up earthly treasures, or in anxious care. They are the same plant, only the one is growing in the tropics of sunny prosperity, and the other in the arctic zone of chill penury.

99. The poor woman that sits quietly in her garret, and works away there, patient, and unknown, and poverty-stricken, at the small tasks and monotonous trivialities of her daily life, is doing the same thing as Paul when he stands up before Cæsar, or as the martyr when he dies at the stake.

100. Every step of the road, you have to cut your way through opposing foes. Every step of the road has to be marked with the blood that comes from wounded feet. Every step of the road is won by a tussle and a strife.





CHAPTER IX.



HE old legend that the Grecian host lay weather-bound in their port, vainly waiting for a wind to come and carry them to conquest ; and that they were obliged to slay a human sacrifice ere the heavens would be propitious and fill their sails,—may be translated into the deepest verity of the Christian life. We may see in it that solemn lesson—no prosperous voyage, and no final conquest until the natural life has been offered up on the altar of hourly self-denial.

2. Just as the old leaves drop naturally from the tree when the new buds of spring begin to put themselves out, let the new affection come and dwell in thy heart, and expel the old.

3. Christ's words are like a jewel with many facets, which catches light at many different angles.

4. Anxiety—it is all vain. After all your careful watching for the corner of the heaven where the cloud is to come from, there *will be* a cloud, and it will rise somewhere, but you never know in what quarter. After all your fortifying of the castle of your life, there will be some little postern left unguarded, some little weak place in the wall left uncommanded by a battery; and there, where you never looked for him, the inevitable invader will come in! After all the plunging of the hero in the fabled waters that made him invulnerable, there was the little spot on the heel, and the arrow found its way *there!*

5. Just as men, with devilish ingenuity, can distil poison out of God's fairest flowers, so we can do with everything that we have.

6. Every blessing, every gladness, every possession external to us, and every faculty and attribute within us, we turn into heavy weights that drag us down to this low spot of earth. We make them all sharp knives with which we clip the wings of our heavenward tendencies, and then we grovel in the dust.

7. Sin is like a great forest-tree that we may sometimes see standing up green in its leafy beauty, and spreading a broad shadow over half a field; but

when we get round on the other side, there is a great, dark hollow in the very heart of it, and corruption is at work there. It is like the poison-tree in travellers' stories, tempting weary men to rest beneath its thick foliage, and insinuating death into the limbs that relax in the fatal coolness of its shade. It is like the apples of Sodom, fair to look upon, but turning to acrid ashes on the unwary lips.

8. Sin is like the magician's rod that we read about in old books. There it lies ; and if tempted by its glitter, or fascinated by the power that it proffers you, you take it in your hand, the thing starts into a serpent with erected crest and sparkling eye, and plunges its quick barb into the hand that holds it, and sends poison through all the veins.

9. There is nothing certain to happen, says the proverb, but the unforeseen.

10. Like a mad bull, the man that is tempted lowers his head and shuts his eyes, and rushes right on.

11. The passion, the desires, the impulses that lead us to do wrong things—they are like a crew that mutiny, and take for a moment the wheel from the steersman and the command from the captain, but then, having driven the ship on the

rocks, the mutineers get intoxicated, and lie down and sleep.

12. When we come to grasp the sweet thing that we have been tempted to seize, there is a serpent that starts up amongst all the flowers.

13. As the old historian says about the Roman armies that marched through a country, burning and destroying every living thing, "They make a solitude, and they call it peace." And so do men with their consciences.

14. Sin is not only guilt, but it is a mistake. "The game is not worth the candle," according to the French proverb.

15. He that is trembling lest the lightning should strike him, has no heart to feel the grandeur and to be moved by the solemn awfulness of the storm above his head. And a man to whom the whole thought, or the predominant thought, when God rises before him, is, how awful will be the incidence of His perfections on my head! does not and durst not think about them, but reverence Him.

16. The Bible knows nothing of an unpractical theology, but, on the other hand, the Bible knows still less of an untheological morality. It digs deep, bottoming the simplest right action upon right

thinking, and going down to the mountain bases on which the very pillars of the universe rest, in order to lay there, firm and immovable, the courses of the temple of a holy life.

17. The short cord of my plummet does not quite go down to the bottom of the bottomless, and I do not profess either to understand God or to understand man, both of which I should want to do before I understood the mystery of their conjoint action.

18. The smallest particle of light falling on the sensitive plate produces a chemical change that can never be done again, and the light of Christ's love brought to the knowledge and presented for the acceptance of a soul, stamps on it an ineffaceable sign of its having been there.

19. Never is the box of ointment opened without some savour from it abiding in every nostril to which its odour is wafted.

20. The natural result of the simple rejection of the Gospel is that, bit by bit, all the lingering remains of nobleness that hover about the man, like scent about a broken vase, shall pass away.

21. Opponents fire their small shot against the great Rock of Ages, and the little pellets fall flat-

tened, and only scale off a bit of the moss that has gathered there.

22. If you would win the world, melt it, do not hammer it.

23. Man after man, rich in gifts, endowed often with far larger and nobler faculties than the people that oppose him, with indomitable perseverance, a martyr to his error, sets himself up against the truth that is sphered in Jesus Christ; and the great Divine message simply goes on its way, and all the battlement and noise is like so many bats flying against a light; or the wild sea-birds that come sweeping up in the tempest and the night, against the hospitable Pharos that is upon the rock, and smite themselves dead against it.

24. I remember, away up in a lonely Highland valley, where beneath a tall, black cliff, all weather-worn, and cracked, and seamed, there lies at the foot, resting on the greensward that creeps round its base, a huge rock that has fallen from the face of the precipice. A shepherd was passing beneath it, and suddenly, when the finger of God's will touched it, and rent it from its ancient bed in the everlasting rock, it came down, leaping and bound—from pinnacle to pinnacle—and it fell; and the

man that was beneath it is there now! "Ground to powder."

25. The man that loves God, what has *he* to be afraid about? All events must be right for him. Every wind must be a south wind, blowing blessing and warmth.

26. The only good that the existence of the passion of fear in a human spirit does, is to warn of danger and to prompt escape from calamity. It sometimes leads us to the place of safety, and then it vanishes, and leaves us there to the guidance of a white-robed angel and a better friend.

27. Fear and love rise up in antagonism to each other as motives in life, like those two mountains from which respectively the blessings and curses of the old law were pronounced—the Mount of Cursing, all barren, stony, without verdure and without water; the Mount of Blessing, green and bright with many a flower, and blessed with many a trickling rill. From the blasted summit of the mountain which gendereth to bondage may be heard the words of the law, but the power to keep all these laws must be sought on the sunny hill, where liberty dwells in love and gives energy to obedience.

28. Intellectual scepticism may be but the thin crust, the hardened surface-layer of the quaking bog

of fear in the heart. The brain is often bribed by the conscience, and the wish becomes the father of the thought.

29. How much of the restless energy in work, how much of the furious abandonment of vice, is nothing more than an attempt to drown the still small voice, by the rushing noise of a turbid, foaming life ! That is fear in the mask of mirth.

30. Our love comes from apprehending that great Gospel and blessed hope, that God's love is mine, mine in His Son. Mine that my love may be perfectly fixed upon it ; mine without disturbance from any of His awful attributes, mine without fear of loss or harm from *any* events. Believing this, the heart fills with a mighty tide of calm, responding love, which sweeps away on the crest of its rejoicing wave the vileness, the sorrows, the fears, which once littered and choked its channels.

31. Dig down to the living rock, Christ and His infinite love to you, and let *it* be the strong foundation, built into which you and your love may become living stones, a holy temple, partaking of the firmness and nature of that on which it rests.

32. All men everywhere have some more or less active or torpid working of conscience. "'Tis conscience that makes cowards"—cowards of whom ?—" *of us all*" said the dramatist.

33. One of our poets gives a grim picture of a traveller on a lonesome road, who has caught a glimpse of a frightful shape close behind him,

“And having once turned round, walks on,
And turns no more his head.”

The dreadful thing is there on his very heels, its breath hot on his cheek ; he feels it though he does not see, but he dare not face round to it ; he puts a strong compulsion on himself, and, with rigidly fixed face, strides on his way, a sickening horror busy with his heart. An awful image that, but a true one, with regard to what many men do with their thoughts of God.

34. Darkness lies on nature, except to those who in

“the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky,”

see that Form which the disciples saw in the morning twilight.

35. Either our life is the subject of a mere chaotic chance ; or else it is put into the mill of an iron destiny, which goes grinding on, and crushing with its remorseless wheels, regardless of what it grinds up ; or else, through it all, in it all, beneath and above it all, there is the Will which is Love, and the Love which is Christ.

36. The tangled web of human history is only intelligible when that is taken as its clue, "From Him are all things, and to Him are all things." The ocean from which the stream of history flows, and that into which it empties itself, are one.

37. The fountain that rises in my heart can only spring up heavenward because the water of it flowed down into my heart from the higher level.

38. It is a dreary seventy years of pilgrimage and strife, unless, as you travel along the road, you still see marks that He, who went before you, has left by the wayside for your guidance and your sustenance.

39. Love will trace Christ everywhere, as dear friends can detect each other in little marks which are meaningless to others. Love has in it a longing for His presence which makes us eager and quick to mark the lightest sign that He for whom it longs is near, as the footstep of some dear one is heard by the sharp ear of affection long before any sound breaks the silence to those around.

40. "It is the Lord" is written large and plain on all things; but, like the great letters on a map, they are so obvious and fill so wide a space, that they are not seen.

41. Our love can never be anything else than the echo to His voice of tenderness, than the reflected light upon our hearts of the full glory of his affection.

X 42. Do not trust a death-bed repentance, my brother. I know that God's mercy is boundless. I know that "whilst there is life there is hope." I know that a man going—swept down that great Niagara—if, before his little skiff tilts over into the awful rapids, he can make one great bound with all his strength, and reach the solid ground—I know he *may be* saved. It is an awful risk to run. A moment's miscalculation, and skiff and voyager alike are whelming in the green chaos below, and come up mangled into nothing, far away down yonder upon the white, turbulent foam.

43. The key-words of Scripture meet the same fate as do coins that have been long in circulation. They pass through so many fingers that the inscriptions get worn off them.

44. There is the great ocean Christ Himself; and on this is the empty vessel of my soul; and the little narrow pipe that has nothing to do but to bring across the refreshing water, *that* is the act of faith in Him.

45. When the child looks up into the mother's face, the symbol to it of all protection ; or into the father's eye, the symbol to it of all authority,—that emotion by which the little one hangs upon the loving hand and trusts the loving heart that towers above it in order to bend over it and scatter good, is the same as the one which, glorified and made divine, rises strong and immortal in its power, when fixed and fastened on Christ, and saves the soul.

46. There is the tree: the trunk goes upward from the little seed, rises into the light, gets the sunshine upon it, and has leaves and fruit. That is the upward tendency of faith—trust in Christ. There is the root, down deep, buried, dark, unseen. Both are springing, but springing in opposite directions, from the one seed. That is, as it were, the negative side, the downward tendency—self-distrust.

47. Logically, faith comes first, and love next, but in life they will spring up together. The question of their order of existence is an often-trod battleground of theology, all strewn with the relics of former fights.

48. Christ stands before each of us. And what is the consequence? A parting of the whole mass of us, some on one side and some on the other. As when you take a magnet, and hold it to an in-

discriminate heap of metal filings, it will gather out all the iron, and leave behind all the rest.

49. The crown of thorns proclaims a sovereignty founded on sufferings. The sceptre of feeble reed speaks of power wielded in gentleness. The cross leads to the crown. The brow that was pierced by the sharp acanthus wreath, therefore wears the diadem of the universe. The hand that passively held the mockery of the worthless, pithless reed, therefore rules the princes of the earth with the rod of iron.

50. The characteristics and attributes of Christ are known to us only by doctrinal propositions and by biographical statements. Apart from them the image of Christ must stand a pale, colourless phantom before the mind, and the faith which is directed towards such a nebula will be an unintelligent emotion, as nebulous and impotent as the shadow towards which it turns.

51. It is the prerogative of man that his force comes from his mind, and not from his body.

52. That old song about a sad heart tiring in a mile, is as true in regard to the Gospel, and the works of Christian people, as in any other case.

53. The gladness which rests in Christ will be a gladness which will fit us for all service and all en-

duration ; which will be unbroken by any sorrow, and, like the magic shield of the old legend, invisible, slender, in its crystalline purity, will stand before the tempted heart, and will repel all the "fiery darts of the wicked."

54. If the arm is to smite with vigour, it must smite at the bidding of a calm and light heart.

55. Memory in another world is indispensable to the gladness of the glad, and strikes the deepest note in the sadness of the lost.

56. For some, in another world, growth will only be a growth into greater power of feeling greater sorrow. Such an one grows up into a Hercules ; but it is only that the Nessus shirt may wrap round him more tightly, and may gnaw him with a fiercer agony.

57. Everything which you do leaves its effect with you for ever, just as long-forgotten meals are in your blood and bones to-day.

58. Every act that a man performs has printed itself upon his soul, it has become a part of himself ; and, though, like a newly-painted picture, after a little while the colors go in, why is that ? Only because they have entered into the very fibre of the canvas, and have left the surface because

they are incorporated with the substance, and they want but a touch of varnish to flash out again.

59. How strangely there come swimming up before us, out of the depths of the dim waters of oblivion—as one has seen some bright shell drawn from the sunless sea-caves, and gleaming white and shapeless far down before we had it on the surface—past thoughts, we know not whence or how!

60. As the developing solution brings out the image on the photographic plate, so the mind has the strange power, by fixing the attention, as we say (a short word which means a long, mysterious thing), upon that past that is half-remembered and half-forgotten, of bringing it into clear consciousness and perfect recollection.

61. Men remember their childhood which they had forgotten for long years. You may remember that old story of the dying woman beginning to speak in a tongue unknown to all that stood around her bed. When a child, she had learned some northern language, in a far-off land. Long before she had learned to shape any definite remembrances of the place, she had been taken away, and not having used, had forgotten the speech. But at last there rushed up again all the old memories, and the tongue of the dumb was loosed and she spake!

62. The fragmentary remembrances which we have now, lift themselves above the ocean of forgetfulness like islands in some Archipelago, the summits of sister hills, though separated by the estranging sea that covers their converging sides and the valleys where their roots unite. The solid land is there, though hidden. Drain off the sea, and there will be no more isolated peaks, but continuous land.

63. As on the little retina of an eye there can be painted, on a scale inconceivably minute, every tree and mountain-top in the whole wide panorama—so, in an instant, one may run through almost a whole lifetime of mental acts.

64. The drowning man, when he comes to himself, tells us, that in the interval betwixt the instant when he felt he was going and the passing away of consciousness, all his life stood before him ; as if some flash in a dark midnight, had lighted up a whole mountain country—there it all was !

65. As from the mountain of eternity we shall look down, and behold the whole plain spread before us. Down here we get lost and confused in the devious valleys that run off from the roots of the hills everywhere, and we cannot make out which way the streams are going, and what there is behind that low shoulder of hill yonder ; but when we get

to the summit peak, and look down, it will all shape itself into one consistent whole, and we shall see it all at once.

66. One old Roman tyrant had a punishment in which he bound the dead body of the murdered to the living body of the murderer, and left them there scaffolded. And when that voice comes, "Son, remember!" to the living soul of the godless, unbelieving, impenitent man, there is bound to him the murdered past, the dead past, his own life; and, in Milton's awful and profound words:—

"Which way I fly is hell—myself am hell."

67. God is the divine and unfathomable ocean; Christ the Son is the Stream that brings salvation to every man's lips.

68. Oh! my friend, you are a happy and a singular man if there is nothing in your life that you have tried to bury, and the obstinate thing *will* not be buried, but meets you again when you come away from its fancied grave. I remember an old castle where they tell us of foul murder committed in a vaulted chamber with a narrow window, by torchlight one night; and there, they say, there are the streaks and stains of blood on the black oak floor; and they have planed, and scrubbed, and planed again, and thought they were gone—but

there they always are, and continually up comes the dull reddish-black stain, as if oozing itself out through the boards to witness to the bloody crime again !

69. When a heart is diverted from its one central purpose, when a life is split up in a hundred different directions and into a hundred different emotions, it is like a beam of light passed through some broken surface where it is all refracted and shivered into fragments ; there is no clear vision, there is no perfect light.

70. Like some black rock that heaves itself above the surface of a sun-lit sea, and the wave runs dashing over it ; and the spray, as it falls down its sides, is all rainbowed and lightened ; and there comes beauty into the mighty grimness of the black thing ; so a man's transgressions rear themselves up, and God's great love, coming sweeping itself against them and over them, makes out of the sin an occasion for the flashing more brightly of the beauty of His mercy, and turns the life of the pardoned penitent into a life of which even the sin is not pain to remember.

71. There be two thirsts, one the longing for God, which, satisfied, is heaven ; one, the longing for cessation of the self-lit fires, and for one drop

of the lost delights of earth to cool the thirsty throat, which, unsatisfied, is hell.

72. All great thoughts have a solemn quiet in them, which not unfrequently merges into a still sorrow.

73. Yes, joy, but sorrow too ! the joy of the Lord, but sorrow as we look on our own sin and the world's woe ! the head anointed with the oil of gladness, but also crowned with thorns ! These two states of mind, both of them the natural operations of any deep faith, may co-exist and blend into one another, so as that the gladness is sobered, and chastened, and made manly and noble ; and that the sorrow is like some thunder-cloud, all streaked with bars of sunshine, that go into its deepest depths. The two do not clash against each other, or reduce the emotion to a neutral indifference, but they blend into one another ; just as, in the Arctic regions, deep down beneath the cold snow, with its white desolation and its barren death, you shall find the budding of the early spring flowers and the fresh green grass ; just as some kinds of fire burn below the water ; just as, in the midst of the barren and undrinkable sea, there may be welling up some little fountain of fresh water that comes from a deeper depth than the great ocean around it, and pours its sweet streams along the surface of the salt waste.

74. The Christian life is all like one of those sweet spring showers in early April, when the rain-drops weave for us a mist that hides the sunshine ; and yet the hidden sun is in every sparkling drop, and they are all saturated and steeped in its light.

75. Just as you inject colouring matter into the fibres of some anatomical preparation ; so a Christian may, as it were, inject into all the veins of his religious character and life, either the bright tints of gladness or the dark ones of self-despondency ; and the result will be according to the thing that he has put into them.

76. The natural character determines to a large extent the perspective of our conceptions of Christian truth, and the colouring of our inner religious life.

77. If there is but little heat around the bulk of the thermometer, no wonder that the mercury marks a low degree. If there is but small faith, there will not be much gladness.

78. Men venture themselves upon God's word as they do on doubtful ice, timidly putting a light foot out, to feel if it will bear them, and always having the tacit fear, "now, it is going to crack !" You must cast yourself on God's gospel with all your weight, without any hanging back, without any doubt, without even the shadow of a suspicion

that it will *give*—that the firm, pure floor will give, and let you through into the water.

79. If a man has once felt, and feels, in however small and feeble a degree, and depressed by whatsoever sense of daily transgressions, if he feel, faint like the first movement of an imprisoned bird in its egg, the feeble pulse of an almost imperceptible and fluttering faith beat—then that man has a right to say, “God is mine.”

80. As one of our great teachers, not long gone from us, said, “Let me take my personal salvation for granted”—and what? and “be idle?” No; “and *work* from it.”

81. Just as men that would see the stars at noon-day, look not into the heavens above them, but down into some deep, dark well; when *you*, Christian, would have the highest pattern and the surest pledge of your immortal blessedness, gaze with fixed eye down into the depths of that spirit of yours where God’s Spirit abides; and though at first you may see nothing but its own cold waters, look and ever look, and you will see at last, glimmering and shimmering beneath its surface, tremulous light points, the shadows of the stars; for the Holy Spirit that is mirrored there, is “the earnest,” the sample, and the evidence of “the inheritance.”

82. The cold waters of that narrow stream of death are no purifying bath in which you may wash and be clean.

83. Many Christians manage to distil for themselves a bitter vinegar of self-accusation out of grand words in the Bible, that were meant to afford them but the wine of gladness and of consolation.

X 84. The road into Giant Despair's castle is through doubt.

85. No one, who plunges himself into the affairs of the world without God, can easily escape out of two sad alternatives. Either he is utterly wearied and disgusted with their triviality, and dawdles out a languid life of supercilious superiority to his work, or else he plunges passionately into it, and, like the ancient queen, dissolves in the cup the precious jewel of his own soul.

86. Sin is but the cloud behind which the everlasting Sun lies in all its power and warmth, unaffected by the cloud ; and the light will yet strike, the light of His love will yet pierce through, with its merciful shafts, bringing healing in their beams, and dispersing all the pitchy darkness of man's transgression.

87. What a grand thing the life is into the

midst of which can be injected, as it were,—like the branching veins of silver in the hard rock—the glorious, rich metal of this Divine influence. Death simply is the means for the coming of the superlative of what here we have in the positive!

88. What a solemn and sublime thought it is that a Christian carries through this world in his heart no smaller possession than the productive seed which only needs its natural climate and its fostering skies to burst into the unfading flower of endless and perfect glory!

89. The witness of the Spirit, if it were yonder in heaven, would shine like a perpetual star; the witness of the Spirit, here in the heart on earth, burns like a flickering flame, never to be extinguished, but still not always bright, wanting to be trimmed, and needing to be guarded from rude blasts.

90. You will never “brighten your evidences” by polishing at them. To polish the mirror ever so assiduously does not secure the image of the sun on its surface. The only way to do that is to carry the poor bit of glass out into the sunshine. It will shine then, never fear.

91. Christ’s pitying tenderness had sometimes to clothe itself in sharpest words, even as His hand

of powerful love had once to grasp the scourge of small cords.

92. You cannot gather up the spilt water ; you cannot any more gather up and re-issue the past life.

93. Christ's suffering stands as a thing by itself, and unapproachable, a solitary pillar rising up above the waste of time.

1 94. Christ is willing to bear and help me to bear, the pettiest, the minutest, and most insignificant of the daily annoyances that may come to ruffle me. Whether it be a poison from one serpent sting, or whether it be poison from a million of buzzing tiny, mosquitoes ; if there be a smart, go to Him, and He will help you to bear it.

95. *Our* faith rests on centuries.

96. They tell us that in some trackless lands, when one friend passes through the pathless forests, he breaks a twig ever and anon as he goes, that those who come after may see the traces of his having been there, and may know that they are not out of the road. Oh ! when we are journeying through the murky night, and the dark woods of affliction and sorrow, it is something to find here and there a spray broken, or a leafy stem bent down

with the tread of His foot and the brush of His hand as He passed ; and to remember that the path He trod He has hallowed ; and thus to find lingering fragrances and hidden strengths in the remembrance of Him as "in all points tempted like as we are," bearing grief *for* us, bearing grief *with* us bearing grief *like* us.

97. All the glowing furnaces of fiery trial and all the cold waters of affliction, are but the preparation through which the rough iron is to be passed before it becomes tempered steel, a shaft in the Master's hand.

98. The further the pendulum swings on the one side, the further it goes up on the other. The deeper God plunges the comet into the darkness, out yonder, the closer does it come to the sun at its nearest distance, and the longer does it stand basking and glowing in the full blaze of the glory from the central orb. So, in *our* revolution, the measure of the distance from the farthest point of our darkest earthly sorrow, *to* the throne, may help us to the measure of the closeness of the bright, perfect, perpetual glory above, when we are *on* the throne : for if so be that we are sons, we *must* suffer with Him ; if so be that we suffer, we *must* be glorified together.

99. Those weeping Marys found those two calm angel forms sitting with folded wings, like the cherubim over the mercy seat, but overshadowing a better propitiation.

100. All that we can do, when we seek to remember, is to wander back somewhere about that point in our life where the shy thing lurks, and hope to catch some sight of it in the leafy coverts.





CHAPTER X.



EATH is an isthmus, narrow and almost impalpable, on which, for one brief instant, the soul poises itself; whilst behind it there lies the inland lake of past being, and before it the shoreless ocean of future life, all lighted with the glory of God, and making music as it breaks even upon these dark, rough rocks.

2. Death is but a passage. It is not a house, it is only a vestibule. The grave has a door on its inner side.

3. Death is a darkness that is caused by the light, and a darkness that ends in the light.

4. As we play with the names of those that are familiar to us, so a loving faith can venture to play, as it were, with the awful name of Him who is King of Terrors, and to minimise it down to that shadow

and reflection of itself which we find in the mighty act of going to rest.

5. On the clear mountain top we stand in the light of God's face; and then we come down into the plain, and the earthly vapours shut out the blue.

6. I am afraid that the most of Christian people do with that Divine reason for work, "the love of Christ constraineth me," as the old Franks (to use a strange illustration) used to do with their long-haired kings, they keep them in the palace at all ordinary times, give them no power over the government of the kingdom, only now and then bring them out to grace a procession, and then take them back again into their reverential impotence.

7. Our high tides of devotion do not come so often as the tides of the sea, and then for the rest of our time there is the long stretch of foul, oozy, barren beach when the waters are out, and all is desolation and deadness.

8. The best of earth is the shadow of heaven.

9. Do you and I keep our religion as princes do their crown jewels—only wearing them on festive occasions, and have we another dress for week-days and working-days?

10. Would it not be grand if we could so go through life, as that all should be not one dead level, but one high plateau, as it were, on the mountain-top there, because all rested upon "Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus."

11. That one motive, "The love of Christ constraineth us," is like one of those applications of power you have often seen, where a huge hammer is lifted up, and comes down with a crash that breaks the granite in pieces, or may be allowed to fall so gently and so true, that it touches without cracking a tiny nut beneath it. The *one* principle, mighty and crashing when it is wanted; and yet coming down with gentle, with accurately-proportioned force on *all* life. Or, to take a higher illustration: it is like that mighty power that holds a planet in its orbit, in the wild, weltering waste of solitary space; and yet binds down the sand-grain and dust-mote to its place.

12. How differently, eight hundred years ago Normans and Saxons looked at the square towers that were built all over England to bridle the inhabitants! To the one they were the sign of the security of their dominion; to the other they were the sign of their slavery and submission. Torture and prison-houses they might become; frowning

portents they necessarily were. The way of the Lord is a castle-fortress to the man who does good, and to the man that does evil it is a threatening prison, which may become a hell of torture.

13. To many modern thinkers the whole drift and tendency of human affairs affords no sign of a person directing these. They hear the clashing and grinding of opposing forces, the thunder as of falling avalanches, and the moaning as of a homeless wind, but they hear the sound of no footfalls echoing down the ages.

14. Music is a torture to some ears; and there are people who have so alienated their hearts and wills from God that the Name that should be "their dearest faith" is not only their "ghastliest doubt," but their greatest pain.

15. "And seeketh that which is gone astray." The word is, literally, "which goeth astray," not "which is gone astray." It pictures the process of wandering, not the result as accomplished. We see the sheep, poor, silly creatures, not going anywhere in particular, only there is a sweet tuft of grass here, and it crops that; and then there is another a little further, and it crops that; and here there is a bit of ground which is soft walking, and it goes there; and so, step by step, not meaning anything, not knowing

where it is going, or that it is going anywhere, it goes, and goes, and goes, and, at last, it finds out that it is away on its beat on the hill-side—for sheep keep to one little bit of hill-side generally, as a shepherd will tell you—and then when it begins to bleat, and, most helpless of creatures, fluttering and excited, tears about amongst the thorns and brambles, or gets mired in some quag or other, and it will never get back itself until somebody comes for it.

16. As a bit of glass, when the light strikes it, flashes into sunny glory ; as every poor little muddy pool on the pavement, when the sunbeam falls upon it, has the sun mirrored even in its shallow mud ; so into your poor heart and mine the vision of Christ's glory will come, moulding and transforming you to its own beauty.

17. Men have learned to love and gaze upon some fair character till some image of its beauty has passed into their ruder natures. To love such and look on them has been an education.

18. A man never gets to the end of the distance that separates between him and the Father, if his face is turned away from God. Every moment the separation is increasing. Two lines start from each other at the acutest angle, are further apart from each other the further they are produced, until at last

the one may be away up by the side of God's throne, and the other away down in the deepest depths of hell.

19. There is a great deal in every nature, and, most of all, in a Christian nature, which is like the packages emigrants take with them, marked "not wanted on the voyage." These go down into the hold, and they are only of use after landing in the new world.

20. The dreams of a chrysalis about what it would be when it was a butterfly would be as reliable as a man's imagination of what a future life will be.

21. Ignorance is not always repellent. Blank ignorance is. But ignorance shot with knowledge like a tissue, which, when you hold it one way, seems all black, and, when you tilt another, seems golden, stimulates men's desires, hopes, and imaginations.

22. The white mountains keep their secret well. Not until we have passed through the black rocks that make the throat of the pass on the summit, shall we see the broad and shining plains beyond the hills. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be."

23. Like the great aqueducts that stretch from the hills across the Roman Campagna, the Incarna-

tion of Jesus Christ brings the waters of the fountain from the mountains of God into the lower levels of our nature, and the fœtid alleys of our sins.

24. Many of us walk in darkness, who, if we were but in communion with God, would see the lone hill-side blazing with chariots of horses of fire.

25. That great Light, which is Christ, is like the star that hung over the magi, fit to blaze in the heavens, and yet stooping to the lowly task of guiding three poor men along a muddy road on earth.

26. In communion with God, you will get light in all seasons of darkness and of sorrow. The darkest hours of earthly fortune will be like a Greenland summer night, when the sun scarcely dips below the horizon ; and, even when it is absent, all the heaven is aglow with a calm twilight.

27. Like some citadel, that has an unfailing well in its court-yard, we may have a fountain of gladness within ourselves which nothing that touches the outside can cut off.

28. "With Thee is the fountain of life." The words give a wonderful idea of the connection between God and all living creatures. The fountain rises, the spray on the summit catches the sunlight

for a moment, and then falls into the basin, jet after jet springing up into the light, and in its turn, recoiling into the darkness. The water in the fountain, the water in the spray, the water in the basin are all one.

29. There is such a thing as death in life ; living men may be dead in trespasses and sins, dead in pleasure, dead in selfishness. The awful vision of Coleridge, in the " Ancient Mariner," of dead men standing up and pulling at the ropes, is only a picture of the realities of life ; where, as on some Witches' Sabbath, corpses move about in the activities of this dead world.

30. After a world of hungry men have fed upon Christ, He remains inexhaustible as at the beginning ; like the bread in His own miracles, of which the pieces that were broken and ready to be given to the eaters were more than the original stock as it appeared when the meal began. Or like the fabled meal in the Norse Walhalla, which the gods sat down to to-day, and to-morrow it is all there on the board, as abundant and full as ever.

31. Many of the sources of earthly felicity are dammed up and stopped off from us if we are living beneath the shadow of God's wings. Life will seem to be and will be sterner, and graver, and sadder

than the "lives that ring with idiot laughter, solely," and have no music because they have no melancholy in them.

32. What a blessing it is for us to have, as we may have, a source of joy, frozen by no winter, dried up by no summer, muddied and corrupted by no iridescent scum of putrefaction which ever mantles over the stagnant ponds of earthly joy.

33. Let us be sure that what we do not understand yet is good and loving too. The web is of one texture throughout. The least educated ear can catch the music of the simplest melodies which run through the Great Composer's work. We shall one day be able to appreciate the yet fuller music of the more recondite parts, which to us seem only jangling and chaos at present.

34. That man who has God on his side is rich ; that man is a pauper who has not God for his.

35. "How often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings!" The Old Testament took the emblem of the eagle—sovereign, and strong, and fierce. The New Testament took the emblem of the domestic fowl—peaceable, and gentle, and affectionate.

36. Why will you "spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfies not," as Indians in famine eat clay, which fills their stomachs but neither stays their hunger nor ministers strength?

37. The heavens are the home of light, the source of every blessing, arching over every head, rimming every horizon, holding all the stars, opening into abysses as we gaze, with us by night and by day, undimmed by the mist and smoke of earth, unchanged by the lapse of centuries, ever seen, never reached, bending over us always, always far above us. And so the mercy of God towers above us, and stoops down towards us, rims us all about, and arches over us all, sheds down its dewy benediction by night and by day, is filled with a million stars and light points of beauty and of splendour, is near us ever to bless and succour, to help, and holds us all in its blue round. "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens."

38. The obscurity of the sea. And what sort of obscurity is that? Not that which comes from mud or anything added. That which comes from depth. As far as a man can see down into its blue-green depths they are clear and translucent; but where the light fails, and the eye fails, there

comes what we call obscurity. The sea is clear but our sight is limited.

39. "Thy righteousness is like the great mountains—Thy judgments are a great deep." Here towers Vesuvius ; there at its feet lie the waters of the bay. So the righteousness springs up like some great cliff rising sheer from the water's edge, while its feet are laved by "the sea of glass mingled with fire," the Divine judgments, unfathomable and shoreless. The mountains and the sea are the two grandest things in nature, and in their combination sublime ; the one, the home of calm and silence, the other in perpetual motion ; but the mountain's roots are deeper than the depths of the sea, and though the judgments are a mighty deep, the righteousness is deeper, and is the bed of that ocean.

40. God's righteousness towers above us ; God's judgments go down beneath us. We can scarcely measure adequately the one or the other. The mountain is high, the deep is profound. Between the mountain and the sea there is a strip of level land. Upon the level where we live are the green fields, where the cattle browse, and the birds sing, and we till, and reap, and live, and are fed.

41. The northern and the southern pole of the great sphere are one and the same, a straight axle through the very heart of it, from which the bound-

ing lines swell out to the equator, and towards which they converge again on the opposite side of the world. So mercy is the strong axle-tree, the northern pole and the southern, on which the whole world of the Divine perfections revolves and moves.

42. Unless Thy righteousness, like the great mountains, surrounds and guards the low plain of our lives, they will lie open to all foes.

43. "Thy righteousness is like the great mountains." Like these, its roots are fast and stable ; like these, it stands firm for ever ; like these, its summits touch the fleeting clouds of human circumstances ; like these, it is a shelter and a refuge, inaccessible in its steepest peaks, but affording many a cleft in its rocks, where a man may hide and be safe. But, unlike these, it knew no beginning, and shall know no end. Emblems of permanence as they are, though Olivet looks down on Jerusalem as it did when Melchisedek was its king, and Tabor and Hermon stand as they did before human lips had named them, they are wearing away by winter storms and summer heat. But God's righteousness is more stable than the mountains, and firmer than the firmest things upon earth.

44. "There shall be two women grinding at a mill," the one of them at that side shall be a Chris-

tian, the other of them on that shall not. They push the handle round, and the push that carries the handle round one half the circumference of the mill-stone may be a bit of religious worship, and the push that carries it round the other half of the circumference may be a bit of serving the world, and the flesh, and the devil. It is not the things you do, it is the way you do them.

45. Two men shall be sitting at the same desk, two boys at the same bench at school, two students at the same books down at Owen's College there ; and the one shall be serving God and glorifying His Name, and the other shall be serving self and Satan.

46. As a mother might fling herself out of the sledge that her child might escape the wolves in full chase, here is one that comes and fronts all your foes and says, "Let these go their way. Take Me."

47. The world is hard and rude ; the world is blind and stupid ; the world often fails to know its best friends and its truest benefactors ; but there is no crust of stupidity so crass and dense but that through it will pass the penetrating shafts of light that ray from the face of a man who walks in fellowship with Jesus.

48. Just as every leaf which you take off some plants and stick into a flower-pot will, in time, become a little plant exactly like the parent from which it was taken ; so the Christ-life that is in you, if it is worth anything—that is to say, if it is really in you at all—will be shaping you into His likeness, and growing into a copy of its source and origin.

49. The least little tiny speck of musk, invisibly taken from a cake of it, and carried away ever so far, will diffuse the same fragrance as the mass from which it came ; and the little, almost imperceptible slice, if I may so say, of Jesus Christ's life that is in you and me, will smell as sweet, if not as strong, as the mass from which it came.

50. A certain kind of sea-weeds that lie down at the bottom of the sea, when their flowering time comes, elongate their stalks, and reach the light, and float upon the top, and then, when they have flowered and fruited, they sink again into the depths. Our Christian life should come up to the surface, and open out its flowers there, and show them to the heavens and to all eyes that look.

51. I heard a few nights ago that if you take a bit of phosphorous and put it upon a slip of wood, and ignite the phosphorus, bright as the blaze is, there drops from it a white ash that coats the wood,

and makes it almost impossible to kindle the wood. And so, when the flaming conviction laid upon your hearts has burnt itself out, it has coated the heart, and it will be very difficult to kindle the light there again.

52. The darkest prison cell will not be so very dark if we remember that Christ has been there before us; and death itself will be softened into sleep because our Lord has died.

53. Shakespeare puts a grim word into the mouth of one of his characters which puts the theory of many of us in its true light, when describing a dying man calling upon God, he makes the narrator say: "I, to comfort him, bid him he should not think of God. I hoped there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet."

54. Just as the lower gift of what we call "genius" is above all limits of culture, or education, or position, and falls on a wool-stapler in Stratford-on-Avon, or on a ploughman in Ayrshire; so, in a similar manner, the altogether different gift of that Divine, life-giving Spirit follows no lines that churches or institutions draw. It falls upon an Augustinian monk in a convent; and he shakes Europe. It falls upon a tinker in Bedford gaol; and he writes "Pilgrim's Progress." It falls

upon a cobbler in Kettering; and he founds Christian missions.

55. The old divines used to say that God was greatest in the smallest things.

56. We have no right to ask for an impossible uniformity of religious experience. You can print off as many copies as you like of a drawing of a flower on a printing-press, and they all shall be alike, petal for petal, leaf for leaf, shade for shade; but no two hand-drawn copies will be so precisely alike, still less, will any two of the real buds that blow on the bush there. Life produces resemblance with differences; it is machinery that makes fac-similes.

57. I remember once holding on by the ground on the top of Vesuvius, and looking full into the crater all swirling with sulphurous flames. Have you ever looked into your hearts like that, and seen the wreathing smoke and the flashing fire that are there?

58. Just as when the chemist collects oxygen in a vessel filled with water, as it passes into the jar it drives out the water before it; the love of God, if it come into a man's heart in any real sense, in the measure in which it comes, will deliver him from the love of the world.

59. "Can there be any good thing come out of Nazareth?" A prejudice, no doubt, but a very harmless one ; a very thin ice, which melted as soon as Christ's smile beamed upon Nathaniel.

60. I suppose all of us can look back to a place somewhere or other, under some hawthorn-hedge, or some boulder by the sea-shore, or some mountain-top, perhaps in some back parlour. or in some crowded street, where some never-to-be-forgotten epoch in our soul's history passed, unseen by all eyes, and which would have shown no trace except, perhaps, a tightly-compressed lip, to any on-looker.

61. The bells that jingle on the horses in the waggoner's team may bear the same inscription as blazed on the High Priest's mitre, "Holiness to the Lord" ; and the shop-girl behind the counter may be as truly offering sacrifice to God as the priest by the altar.

62. A dew-drop is shaped by the same laws which mould the mightiest of the planets.

63. Christ was a man to whom all men with whom He came in contact were like those clocks with a crystal face, which show us all the works.

64. Let us rejoice to feel that Christ sees all those moments which no other eye can see. In

our hours of crisis, and in our monotonous and uneventful moments, in the rush of the furious waters when the stream of our lives is caught among rocks, and in the long, languid reaches of its smoothest flow, when we are fighting with our fears or yearning for His light, or even when sitting dumb and stolid like snow-men, apathetic and frozen in our indifference, He sees us and pities and will help the need which He beholds.

65. Just as when you take a flower out of the woods, and put it into a greenhouse, and cultivate, and nip it, and guide its growth, you will get a broader leaf and a finer flower than when it was wild ; so the disciplined, restrained, consecrated man is the man whose life is the richest, fullest, largest, the gladsomest, the noblest in every way.

66. To lift Christ up is the work of all Christian preachers and teachers ; and, as far as they can, to hide themselves behind Jesus Christ, or, at the most, to let themselves appear just as the old painters used to let their own likenesses appear in the great altar-pieces—a little kneeling figure, there, away in a dark corner of the background.

67. Our arguments for Christianity do fare very often very much as did that elaborate discourse that a bishop once preached to prove the existence

of a God, at the end of which a simple old woman, who had not followed his reasoning very intelligently, exclaimed, "Well, for all he says, I can't help thinking there's a God after all."

68. The "sorrow of the world" passes over me like the empty wind through an archway. It whistles for a moment and is gone, and there is nothing left to show that it was ever there. It comes like one of those brooks in tropical countries, dry and white for half the year, and then there is a rush of muddy waters, fierce but transient, and leaving no results behind.

69. Is it as blessed for you to feel: "Thou, Christ, beholdest me now," as it is for a child to feel that when it is playing in the garden its mother is sitting up at the window watching it, and that no harm can come?

70. There have been men driven mad in prisons because they knew that somewhere in the wall there was a little pin-hole, through which a goaler's eye was always, or might be always, glaring down at them.

71. You may pound a man's mistaken creed to atoms with sledge-hammers of reasoning, and he is not much the nearer being a Christian than he was

before ; just as you may pound ice to pieces, and it is pounded ice after all.

72. God has made us for something else than that we should be the sport of circumstances. And it is a disgrace to any of us that our lives should be like some little fishing-boat, with an unskilful or feeble hand at the tiller, yawling from one point of the compass to another, and not keeping a straight and direct course.

73. Soldiers follow their commanders. There is the hell of the battle field ; here a line of wavering, timid, raw recruits. Their commander rushes to the front, and throws himself upon the advancing enemy with the one word "Follow !" And the weakest becomes a hero.

74. Travellers follow a guide. Here is a man upon some dangerous corner of the Alps, with a bit of limestone as broad as the palm of your hand for him to pick his steps upon, and, perhaps, a couple of feet of snow above that for him to walk upon, a precipice of two thousand feet on either side. And his guide says, as he ropes himself to him, "Now, look here ! you tread where I tread." Jesus said to Philip "Follow Me."

75. The "Imitation of Christ" which the old

anonymous monk wrote about, is the sum of all practical Christianity.

76. Two snow flakes on the top of a mountain are an avalanche by the time they reach the valley.

77. Wherever in our Lord's life any incident indicates more emphatically than usual the lowliness of His humiliation, there, by the side of it, you get something that indicates the majesty of His glory. For instance, He is born a weak infant, but angels herald His birth; He lies in a manger, but a star hangs trembling above it, and leads sages from afar, with their myrrh, and incense, and gold. He sits wearied on the stone coping of a well, and craves for water from a peasant-woman; but He gives her the water of life. He lies down and sleeps, from pure exhaustion, in the stern of the little fishing-boat, but He wakes to command the storm, and it is still. He weeps beside the grave, but He flings His voice into its inmost recesses, and the sheeted dead come forth.

78. Would a beam of light from God, coming in upon your life, be like a light falling upon a gang of conspirators, that would make them huddle all their implements under their garments, and scuttle out of the way as fast as possible? Or would it be like a gleam of sunshine on the flowers,

opening out their petals and wooing from them fragrance? Which?

79. What a strange fate that is which has befallen those persons in the Gospel narrative who, for an instant came into contact with Jesus Christ! Like ships passing across the white splendour of the moonlight on the sea, they gleam silvery pure for a moment as they cross the track, and then are lost and swallowed up in the darkness.

80. Christ's mercy to a world does not come like water in a well that has to be pumped up by our petitions, by our search; but like water in some fountain, rising sparkling into the sunlight by its own inward impulse.

81. Christ came to a forgetful and careless world, like a shepherd who goes after his flock in the wilderness, not because they bleat for him, since they crop the herbage which tempts them even farther from the fold and remember it or him no more; but because he cannot have them lost. The shepherd goes out on the mountain side, for all the storm and the snow, and wades knee-deep through the drifts until he finds the sheep.

82. Universally this is true, that, sooner or later, when the delirium of the passion and the rush of

the temptation are over and we wake to consciousness, we find that we are none the richer for the thing gained ; and oh ! so infinitely the poorer for the means by which we gained it. It is that old story of the veiled prophet that wooed and won the hearts of foolish maidens, and when he had them in his power in the inner chamber, removed the silver veil they had looked upon with love, and shewed hideous features, that struck despair into their hearts. Every man's sin does that for him.

83. The diffused and wide-shining mercies which stream from the Father's heart are all, as it were, focussed, as through a burning-glass, into one strong beam in Christ, which can kindle the greenest wood and melt the thick-ribbed ice.

84. Orthodox orthodoxy, divorced from practice, is like the dried flowers that botanists put between sheets of blotting-paper, with no perfume in them, and no colour in them, and no growth or life in them—the skeletons of dead beauty.

85. The “wrath” and the “love” of God differ much more in the difference of the eye that looks than they do in themselves. Here are two bits of glass—one of them catches and retains all the fiery-red rays ; the other all the yellow. It is the one same pure white beam that passes through them

both ; but one is only capable of receiving the fiery-red beams of the wrath, and the other is capable of receiving the golden light of the love.

86. Christ is the boundless ocean. We have contented ourselves with coasting along the shore, and making timid excursions from one headland to another. Let us strike out into the middle deep, and see all the wonders that are there.

87. This great Christ is like the infinite sky with its unresolved *nebulæ* : we have but looked with our poor, dim eyes ; let us take the telescope, that will reveal to us suns blazing where now we only see darkness.

88. Hearts, like flowers, which could not be burst open by the crowbar of law, may be wooed open by the sunshine of love.

89. Wolves tear sick wolves to pieces.

90. The world looks at its own possessions through a microscope, which magnifies all the infinitesimals, and then it looks at "the land which is very far off" through a telescope turned the wrong way, which diminishes all that is great. But, if we can get up by the side of Jesus Christ, and see things through His eyes and from His station, it will be as when a man climbs a mountain, and the little black line, as it seemed to him when looked

at from the plain, has risen up into a great cliff, and all the big things down below, as they seemed when he was among them, have dwindled. That white speck is a palace ; that bit of a green patch there, over which the skylark flies in a minute, is a great lord's estate.

91. Like some sea-anemone that gathers in its tentacles and shuts itself up over its prey, so that you cannot shove a bristle into the lips ; your hearts may close over your earthly good in such a position, so tight, and desperate, and obstinate, that God's grace and His proffered gifts have no chance of finding their way into your hearts at all.

92. Like some of those rivers that disappear in a subterranean tunnel, and then emerge into the light again ; the life that sinks out of sight in the valley of the shadow of death will come up into a brighter sunshine beyond the mountains, and it will be running in the same direction that it was running in when it was lost to mortal eye.

93. What hindered the runners in that old Grecian legend when she whom they were pursuing cast down in the path a golden apple, and they turned aside and slackened their pace to catch at *that* ?

94. Styrian peasants thrive and fatten upon arsenic ; and men may flourish upon all iniquity and evil, and conscience will say never a word.

95. That our consciences may be enlightened and set right we want a standard, like the standard weights and measures that are kept in the Tower of London, to which all the people in the little country villages may send up their yard measures, and their pint pots, and their pound weights, and find out if they are just and true.

96. Christ upsets the world's standard of value as one might do who went among savages whose only medium of currency was cowrie shells, and putting these aside, let them see that there was gold and silver in the stones that were kicked about by their feet.

97. One grain of love to God and likeness to Him will outweigh, in its power to enrich, a whole California of gold.

98. The smallest soul is bigger than the biggest fortune. Dives' riches are too poor to satisfy Lazarus. All the wealth of all the Rothschilds is too little to fill the soul of the poorest beggar that stands by their carriage door with hungry eyes.

99. We are like the Indians that live in rich gold

countries, who could only gather the ore that happened to lie upon the surface or could be washed out of the sands of the river. But, in this great Christ there are depths of gold, great reefs and veins of it, that will enrich us all if we dig, and we shall not get it unless we dig.

100. Death sets the solitary in families. We are here like travellers plodding lonely through the night and the storm, and then crossing the threshold into the great hall full of friends.

101. Men will be sorted yonder. Gravitation will come into play undisturbed ; and the pebbles will be ranged according to their weights on the great shore where the sea has cast them up, as they are upon Chesil beach down there in the English Channel, and many another coast besides ; all the big ones together and sized off to the smaller ones, regularly and steadily laid out.

102. Men in Dantesque circles were only made more miserable because all around them were of the same sort, and some of them worse than themselves.

103. Conscience is like the light on the binnacle of a ship ; it tosses up and down along with the vessel. We want a steady light yonder on that headland, on the fixed, solid earth, that shall not move as we move, nor vary at all.

104. When Paul felt himself very near his end, he yet had interest enough in common things to tell Timothy all about their mutual friend's occupation, and to wish to have his books and parchments.

105. Scaffoldings are for buildings; and the moments, and days, and years of our earthly lives are scaffolding.

106. Like as in northern lands, where there is only a week or two from the melting of the snow to the cutting of the hay, the whole harvest of a life may be gathered in a very little space, and all be done which is needed to make the life complete.

107. Every Christian man must be lonely. After all communion, we dwell as upon islands dotted over a great archipelago, each upon his little rock, with the sea dashing between us; but the time comes when, if our hearts are set upon that great Lord, whose presence makes us one, there shall be no more sea, and all the isolated rocks shall be parts of a great continent.

108. In this world things of little worth have to be toiled for. Nothing for nothing is the inexorable law in the world's markets; but God sells

without money and without price. Life and the air which sustains it are gifts.

“’Tis only Heaven can be had for the asking,
’Tis only God that is given away.”

109. Men have been asking all through the ages, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?” You have tried to climb. Your progress has been slow, like that of some crawling insect upon some smooth surface—an inch in advance with immense pains, and then a great slide backwards. But Heaven bends down to us, and Christ puts down the palm of His hand, if I may say so, and bids us step on to it, and so bears us up on His hands.

110. A heart that is all agitated, as so many hearts are, by the cares, and joys, and treasures, and sorrows of this life, will be like some mountain lake over which a gust of wind comes, ruffling its surface and blotting out every reflection of sky and stars. You can only mirror God in the calm surface of a pure and quiet heart.

111. Nothing goes through crystal but light; and the crystal battlements of heaven will keep out all the sons of darkness, and all the darkness that is within them.

112. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” The impure heart brings a film of

cataraft over the eye ; and the foul heart is hurt by the light as a diseased eye is.

113. You cannot lay hands on yourself, and lift yourself up from the earth, unless you have got something to lift by, that is fixed outside of you. No more can a man lift himself up from his sin unless there be something above him which he can grasp.

114. It is not enough to wash the hands—the heart must be clean, and all these dormant evils that lie within every one of us, like hybernating snakes in a cave, these must be got rid of somehow if we are to dwell with God.

115. The children's old riddle :

“Banks full and braes full ;

Gather ye all day you will not gather your handsful,”

to which the answer is “Mist!” is a very good designation of the things on which the most of us set our hearts. And if our hearts are thus set on vanity, a thing of naught, a piece of emptiness, like a child's Easter egg, sugar outside and nothing inside, then you cannot get near God.

116. A drop of evil diffused through your heart, will be like a drop of ink in a bucket, it will take away the transparency of the water, and prevent it from reflecting the blue above.

117. When Absalom would not go to Joab, Joab burned his corn, and then Absalom came to him. When a man will not come to Christ, sometimes He burns *his* corn, and then, sometimes, the man comes.

118. You take a hermetically sealed bottle and put it into the sea, it may float about in mid-ocean for a century, surrounded by a shoreless ocean, and it will be as dry and empty inside at the end as it was at the beginning. So you and I float, live, move, and have our being in that great ocean of the Divine love in Christ; but you can cork up your hearts and wax them over with an impenetrable cover, through which that grace does not come.

119. Is your life to be like one of those northern Asiatic rivers that loses itself in the sands, or that flows into, or is sluggishly lost, in a bog? or is it going to tumble over a great precipice, and fall sounding away into the blackness? or is it going to leap up into "everlasting day."

120. I beseech you all, and especially you young people, not to let the world take and mould you, like a bit of soft clay put into a brick-mould, but to lay a masterful hand upon it, and compel it to help you, by God's grace, to be nobler, and truer, and purer.

121. It is a shame for men to live the lives that so many among us live, as completely at the mercy of externals to determine the direction of their lives as the long weeds in a stream yield to the force of the current.

122. The life of a Christian man on earth and his life in Heaven are but one stream, as it were, which may, indeed, like some of those American rivers, run for a time through a deep, dark cavern, or in an underground passage, but comes out at the further end into broader, brighter plains and summer lands ; where it flows, with a quieter current and with the sunshine reflected on its untroubled surface, into the calm ocean.

123. If you have Christ in your heart, then life is possible, peace is possible, joy is possible, under all circumstances and in all places. Everything which the soul can desire it possesses. You will be like men that live in a beleagured castle, and in the court yard a sparkling spring, fed from some source high up in the mountains, and finding its way in there by underground channels which no besiegers can ever touch.

124. It is a miserable thing to see men and women driven before the wind like thistle down. You can make your choice whether, if I may so say,

you shall be like balloons that are at the mercy of the gale, and can only shape their course according as it comes upon them and blows them along ; or, like steamers that have an inward power that enables them to keep their course from whatever point the wind blows ; or like some sharply-built sailing ship that, with a strong hand at the helm, and canvass rightly set, can sail almost in the teeth of the wind and compel it to bear it along in all but the opposite direction to that in which it would carry her if she lay like a log on the water.





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